

TIT-BITS

CHRISTMAS EXTRA

6^D



*"Getting Away
With It!"*

Visions of this year's

MOTHER'S MAGIC



Robertson's Mincemeat

'GOLDEN SHRED' BRAND



By Appointment

Clever Mother! Wonderful Robertson's Mincemeat! Together, the secret of all those glorious pies and puddings and tarts and cakes. Robertson's Mincemeat—made to the exclusive Robertson recipe—sold *only* under the Robertson registered label. See the Robertson label on every jar of mincemeat you buy.

ad M14.

PEOPLE WHO ARE "CHANGING THEIR MINDS"

Wonderful System By Which Thousands of Men and Women Are Gaining a New Mental Equipment for Success in Life

HE is a weak individual who is always changing his mind. He is obviously infirm of purpose and lacks Self-Confidence. He follows the advice of the "last man" until the "next man" comes along and he changes his views as he changes his tie. He is never, as the saying goes, of the same mind for two days together. Thus he can never be relied upon and therefore can never (without dire results) be given the command of anything—be it a shop, an office, a factory, a regiment, a ship, a department, a school, or any form of enterprise. He is fated to remain all his life in a subordinate position where he has "got to do what he is told." And as to-day mere automatons are not usually desired, and as most business men like to have in their employ—even in the most junior positions—people who are capable of Initiative and who, therefore, can be promoted as occasion serves, he often becomes unemployed and remains in that condition.

Sir Herbert Barker's Tribute

There is another kind of man (and woman) however, who is gaining great benefits as a result of changing his mind. He is changing his mind in a very different way. He is changing an untrained mind into a trained one. He is changing an inefficient or only semi-efficient mind into an efficient one. He is one of thousands who are doing the same thing and who as a result are forging to the front in the Professions, in Business, in Industry, indeed in every walk of life. These men and women are "changing their minds" and their lives as a result of taking up Pelmanism. They have read "The Science of Success" and they have enrolled for the Pelman Course of scientific Mind-Training, which, says Sir Herbert Barker, is the means "by which the nation's mental equipment can be brought to its very highest possible pitch of efficiency and maintained there." "The system," he says, "brightens our outlook on the glorious possibilities of life; strengthens and quickens our memory and understanding; gives coherence and clarity to our thoughts, and enhances, unbelievably, our capacity for intellectual enjoyment and usefulness." This is the wonderful system which is fully explained in "The Science of Success." Every reader who would like to read this book can have a copy, free of charge, by writing for it to-day to the Pelman Institute, 68, Pelman House, Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1.

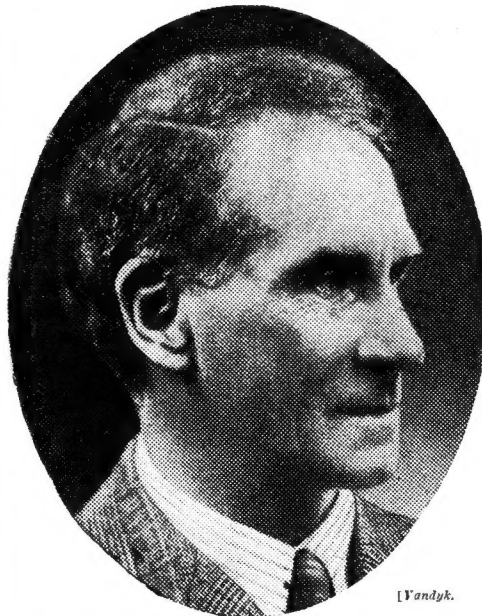
Personal Examples of "Mind-Changing"

Here are a few examples of "Mind-Changing"—letters written by men and women who have trained their minds by means of Pelmanism, describing some of the benefits they have secured as a result.

Shop-Assistant.—"Mentally I feel like a new person, purposeful, energetic and in love with life. Financially I have benefited to a great extent and have received an increase in salary since my last lesson was returned." (S. 34,628.)

Civil Engineer.—Benefits secured: "An increased interest in my work; Originality; Increased Self-Confidence; a surprising improvement in my physical condition; a greater joy in living altogether." (A. 36,215.)

Clerk.—"I now realize that Life is a great thing where formerly it appeared a routine. I have now an interest in my work and studies and find both seem much easier; results come more quickly and better. My spare time is now a joy and is far too short for all I wish to put into it. However, thanks to your course, I can now do three times as much as formerly." (B. 36,667.)



Sir Herbert Barker, who says that Benefit Beyond Computation Can Be Secured by All Who Follow This Course.

Teacher.—"This Course has given me Courage and a broader outlook. My daily work is done with more zest and I hope to achieve what the 'over-forties' are supposed to be unable to do—adapt myself with ease to new work." (C. 36,087.)

Traveller.—"I rise earlier each morning since taking up Pelmanism and in consequence am able to prepare myself for the day's work. I have improved my Memory and am able to concentrate as never before. I am more Observant than hitherto." (H. 35,481.)

Business Woman.—"Developed stronger nerves, giving Self-Confidence which has revealed a greater desire for social intercourse; more aptitude to see in conversations the other point of view; feel the joyful feeling on awakening of the good possibilities of the day." (H. 34,709.)

Book-keeper.—"The Course has eliminated my habit of wasting time and has made my life full of interest. My memory has improved and I can tackle those jobs which used to prove difficult with self-confidence and energy." (B. 35,214.)

Manager.—"The Course has been a great tonic. It has lifted me from a morass of despair to a realization of my capabilities and power. I am master of my fate. I am captain of my soul." (A. 35,066.)

Tradesman.—"I have completely cured my lack of Self-Confidence. My interest in life has increased wonderfully and I have now a definite aim. Instead of dreaming I am now realizing." (M. 35,140.)

Clerk.—"I have gained Self-Confidence. I have formed a clear aim and I have made good progress already, my salary having been augmented twice in a half year. I have strengthened my power of realisation: effort has been easy. My view of life is altered. My heartfelt thanks to you for all these invaluable benefits." (S. 34,261.)

What Pelmanism Does

Thousands of similar instances of "Mind-Changing" could be quoted, and more will be found in that interesting little book entitled "The Science of Success," which everyone will do well to get and read to-day. This book shows how by devoting a short time every day, or for two or three evenings a week, to a simple and interesting course of scientific Mind-Training, which is directed through the post by the experienced instructors of the famous Pelman Institute, you can enable your mind to shake off all such weaknesses as—

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Forgetfulness | Indecision |
| Mind-Wandering | Timidity |
| Depression | Mental Vagueness |
| The Worry Habit | Weak Will |
| Lost Confidence | Sense of Inferiority |
| Lack of Ideas | Inability to Concentrate |
| and in their place develop such valuable powers—valuable both in Business and in Social life—as— | |
| —Determination | —Self-Confidence |
| —Forcefulness | —Concentration |
| —Initiative | —Observation |
| —Judgment | —Mental Alertness |
| —Organizing Power | —Directive Ability |
| —Self-Control | —Perception |
| —Good Memory | —Originality |
| —Cheerfulness | —Optimism |

and many others such as are described in "The Science of Success" and mentioned in the letters quoted here.

Marks You For Promotion

The value of this training is shown in many ways. It marks you out for Promotion and it is a fact that over and over again Pelmanists write to say that they have doubled and sometimes even trebled their Incomes as the result of taking the Pelman Course. Perhaps most important of all, it brings into your life a serenity, a harmony and a happiness such as you have never, perhaps, experienced before, which is due to the fact that your faculties are working smoothly, easily and efficiently, that your mind is under the full control of your Will, that your efforts are producing the results you want them to produce, that your work is being appreciated by others, that your powers are continually expanding, that you are Active instead of Passive, that you are the master and controller of your Fate instead of being merely the sport of Circumstance.

All this and more you can get from Pelmanism, which is fully described in "The Science of Success." Get this book and read it. A copy will be sent you gratis and post free on application to-day to the Pelman Institute, 68, Pelman House, Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1. Fill in the coupon printed below and send it off to-day. By return you will receive a free copy of "The Science of Success" and particulars showing you how you can enrol for a course of Pelmanism on the most convenient terms. Call, or write, for a free copy of this book to-day.

WRITE FOR "THE SCIENCE OF SUCCESS" TO-DAY

Cut out this Form. Fill in your Name and Address. Post To-day in unsealed envelope, bearing a 1d. stamp, to

The Pelman Institute, 68, Pelman House, Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1

Name

Address

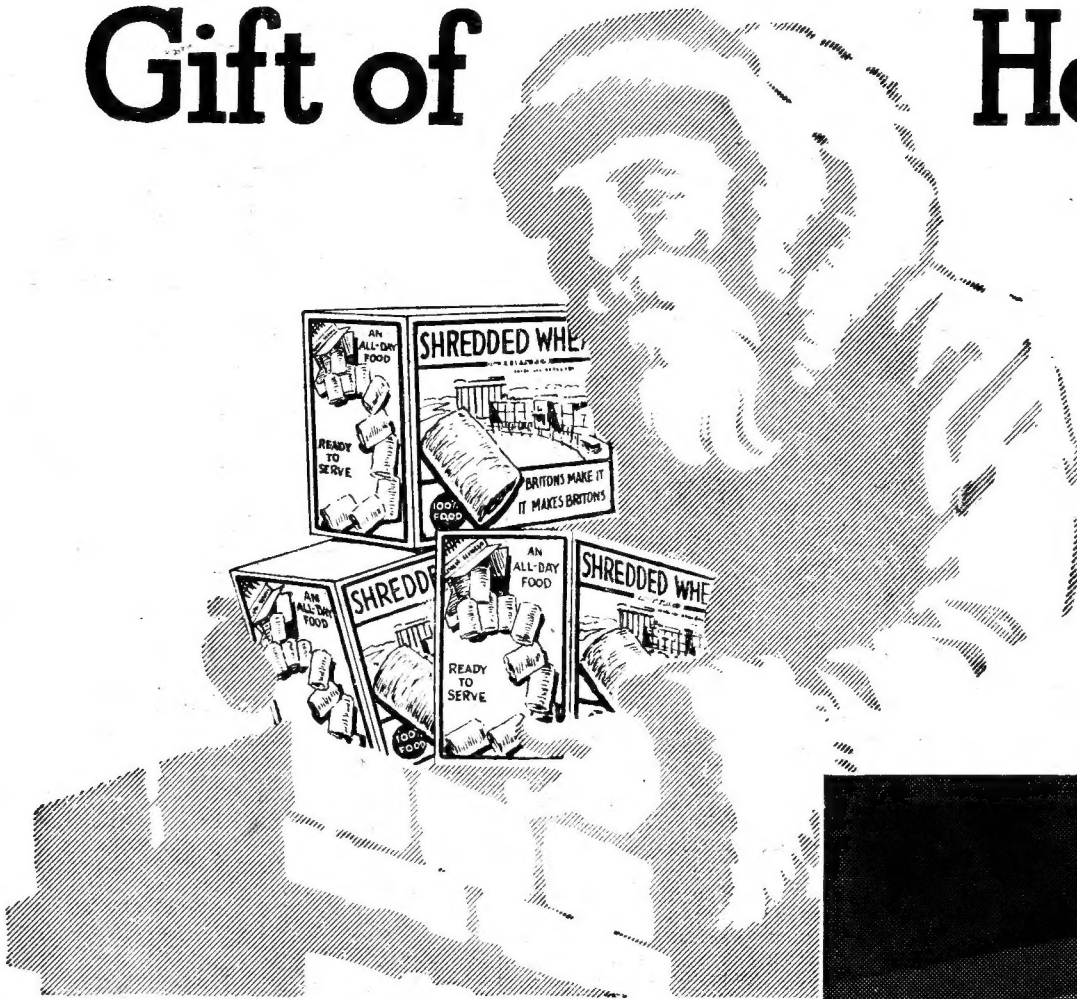
Occupation

A copy of "The Science of Success," with full particulars of the Pelman Course will be sent you by return. Free.

All correspondence is confidential.

PELMAN (OVERSEAS) INSTITUTES: PARIS: 80, Boulevard Haussmann. NEW YORK: 271, North Avenue, New Rochelle. MELBOURNE: 396, Flinders Lane. DURBAN: Natal Bank Chambers. CALCUTTA: 102, Clive Street. DELHI: 10, Alipore Road. AMSTERDAM: Letegracht 30. JAVA: Kronhoutweg 8, Bandoeng.

Santa Claus' Universal Gift of Health

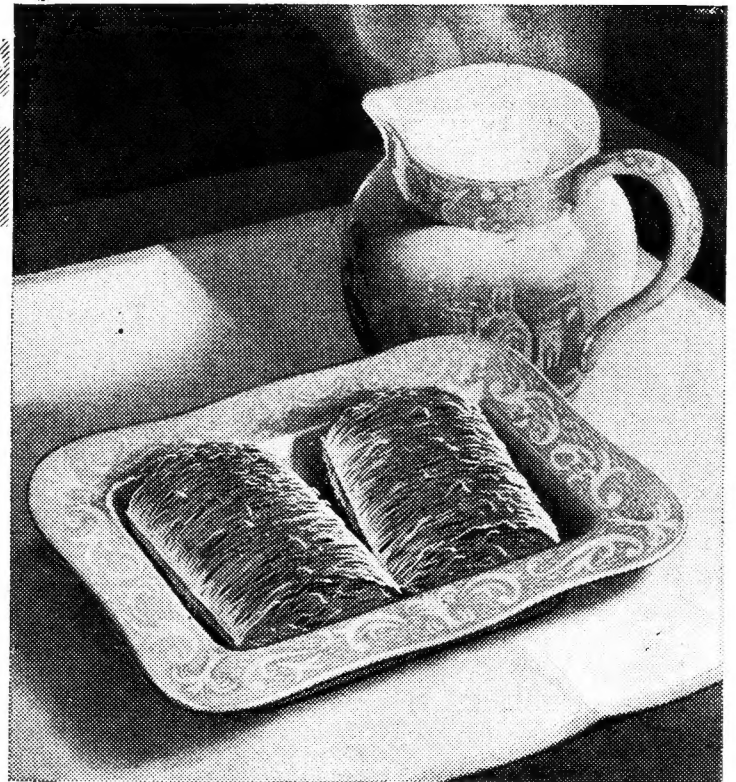


Christmas is the time of many luxury foods—nice—but sometimes rather a tax on the digestive system. That is why all, at this happy season, should be careful to see that they derive wholesome nourishment from their food, so as to ensure that fitness from which good cheer always springs.

A Shredded Wheat breakfast, for instance, regularly from now on until the great day arrives, will strengthen and fortify the system and make you ready for all the fun.

The reason why Shredded Wheat is so splendid as a health food is that it is all pure nourishment—rich in its precious bran content, so vital as a regulative aid. Economical, ready to serve. Delicious with hot milk, butter, cream or fruits.

The Food that brings Health to the Festive Board



SHREDDED WHEAT

MADE BY THE SHREDDED WHEAT CO., LTD., AT WELWYN GARDEN CITY, HERTS.

TIT-BITS-1934

Christmas Extra



GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

Let Me Tell You About

MY CHRISTMAS GUYED

By STANLEY LUPINO

The Popular Comedian



IN an intensive effort to complete my Christmas Dictionary in time for the festive season I have burned the midnight oil, the candle at both ends, and a hole in the carpet of my study—which, by the way, also serves as a repository for a decrepit sewing machine, a dressmaker's dummy, seventy-four back numbers of our parish magazine, and the remnants of a croquet set.

The completed manuscript is now in the press—in fact, it is lending its weight to improve the crease in my best trousers—but I have been prevailed upon to give you a few excerpts in advance from this priceless book. If I can find anyone to publish it, my masterpiece will be obtainable from any good bookseller at 4s. 11½d. a copy. A bad bookseller will probably charge five bob and pocket the other halfpenny for himself.

In offering you these few examples from its pages, I must remind you that they are copyright in all countries, including Brighton, by the B.B.C., the A.B.C., and the C.I.D., and must not be played on the gramophone between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m.

Are you ready? Here you are, then.

A. Album, viscum: This, of course, is the Latin name for mistletoe. Having acquired that valuable slice of information, you will be able to air your erudition at Christmas parties. (Do not judge by appearances. There is nothing rude in erudition; it is merely another name for learning.) Next time you meet a pretty girl at a Christmas gathering and want to make an impression on her, ask her to let you kiss her under the Viscum album. If she is a botanist's daughter you will make an immediate hit; if she is not, she will probably think it is her left ear. In case of difficulty, you can always smooth things over by explaining that, according to reference books, mistletoe really belongs to the family Loranthaceae, and you cannot very well be held responsible for their affairs.

B. Brandy: This is the stuff to administer to Christmas puddings when you want to get them well lit up. It should not be left unguarded, as it has a similar effect upon human beings.

C. Crackers: There are several varieties of crackers, including Christmas crackers, nut-crackers and wise-crackers. Christmas

crackers are provided to make the party go with a bang. They are quite harmless to children, but highly dangerous to bachelors on account of the mottoes they contain. Many a man has lost his freedom through asking a sweet young thing to pull a cracker with him and innocently allowing her to find inside a scrap of paper bearing some such poetic effusion as:—

"The sky is blue, stars shine above;
I will be true to you, my love."

Wise-crackers are, of course, fellows who get all their jokes from *Tit-Bits* and pass them off on their friends as original. Nut-crackers are different, in that they crack every other kind of nut except chestnuts.

D. Diplomacy: This is a quality which every man is called upon to exercise at Christmas. Diplomacy, to give one example, is wearing the tie presented to you by a wealthy maiden aunt.

Two Kinds of Kisses

E. Eve: This refers, of course, to the night before Christmas, not the woman after Adam. For further details see stockings and Santa Claus.

F. Fun: It is important not to confuse this with infidelity. For example, if your wife kisses a good-looking man at a party, that is fun; but if you kiss the prettiest girl, that is infidelity. F. also stands for Father—and he has to stand for anything.

G. Ghosts: See Spirits.

H. Holly: See Decorations.

I. Indigestion: See a doctor.

J. Joke: My dictionary defines this as "something ludicrous, meant only to excite laughter." See Father.

K. Knock, postman's: There are two kinds of postman's knock. One is a popular parlour game which you arrange for the benefit of the children, but with one eye on the dazzling blonde in the corner. The other applies to the visit of the postman on Boxing Day, when he expects you to reward him for having brought you a Demand Note from the Income Tax people.

L. Life-and-soul-of-the-party: Usually a male member of the company who organizes the festivities so efficiently that the guests have no time to enjoy themselves. A little arsenic in his lemonade will work wonders, and a plea of justifiable homicide will generally be accepted.

M. Mother-in-law: Not dealt with in this volume. See pages 9-342 of the "Comedian's Handbook," published 1874.

N. Nightmare: A seasonable dream in which you generally find yourself being chased up a mountain made of plum pudding by a flock of turkeys wearing mince-pies on their heads. Upon reaching the top you are confronted by a Tax Collector who demands that you pay for Schedule B. of your mistletoe tax. When you feel for the money you find that your trousers are missing, whereupon the collector turns into Santa Claus and prods your bare legs with holly, causing you to step

backwards over a precipice and fall at terrific speed until you land with a bump into a bowl of blazing brandy and find that you have tumbled out of bed. See Indigestion.

O. Overdraft: Money obtained from the bank on the hire-purchase system to enable you to pay the bills for last Christmas in order to obtain credit for this one.

Over-eating: A solemn ritual performed by small boys from sunrise to sunset on Christmas Day.

P. Pantomime: A device for using up stale chestnuts.

Pudding: A dish mainly associated with the solemn ritual mentioned above. It is usually carried in slowly and with much ceremony. The youthful victim, however, should be carried out quickly and with no ceremony.

Q. Quadridentate: A creature having only four teeth, such as a grandfather. Will provide endless amusement at parties if given a pickled onion to eat.

R. Radio: There are two kinds of radio. One is an instrument of entertainment, the other an instrument of torture. It all depends whether it belongs to you or to the man next door.

S. Santa Claus: A mythical character frequently impersonated by father for the benefit of the children, who encourage the impersonation because they have not the heart to destroy his illusions.

Stockings: A source of delight to small boys when filled by Santa Claus (i.e., father). An equal source of delight to big boys (e.g., father) when filled by Mr. C. B. Cochran.

T. Tricks, conjuring: No Christmas party is complete without them. To ensure the success of this entertainment, study the instructions with great care and practise assiduously, then provide comfortable seats for your audience and send for a good conjurer.

U. Untouchables: This is a term applied at Christmas to those relatives to whom you need not bother to send a present.

V. Vacuum: An empty space. Seldom found on Christmas afternoon.

W. Waits: Alleged musicians who perform beneath your window long after you have gone to bed. Opinions vary as to what they really wait for, but if they wait long enough they usually get it.

X. Xmas: The X, before Christmas is a mathematical symbol which stands for the unknown quantity. See Overdraft.

Y. Yule-log: A lump of wood covered with glamour. Not to be confused with a certain Hollywood film star.

Z. Zythum: If you look this up in the dictionary you will find that it is the last word. But you needn't bother about this at Christmas or at any other time; your wife will have it, anyway!

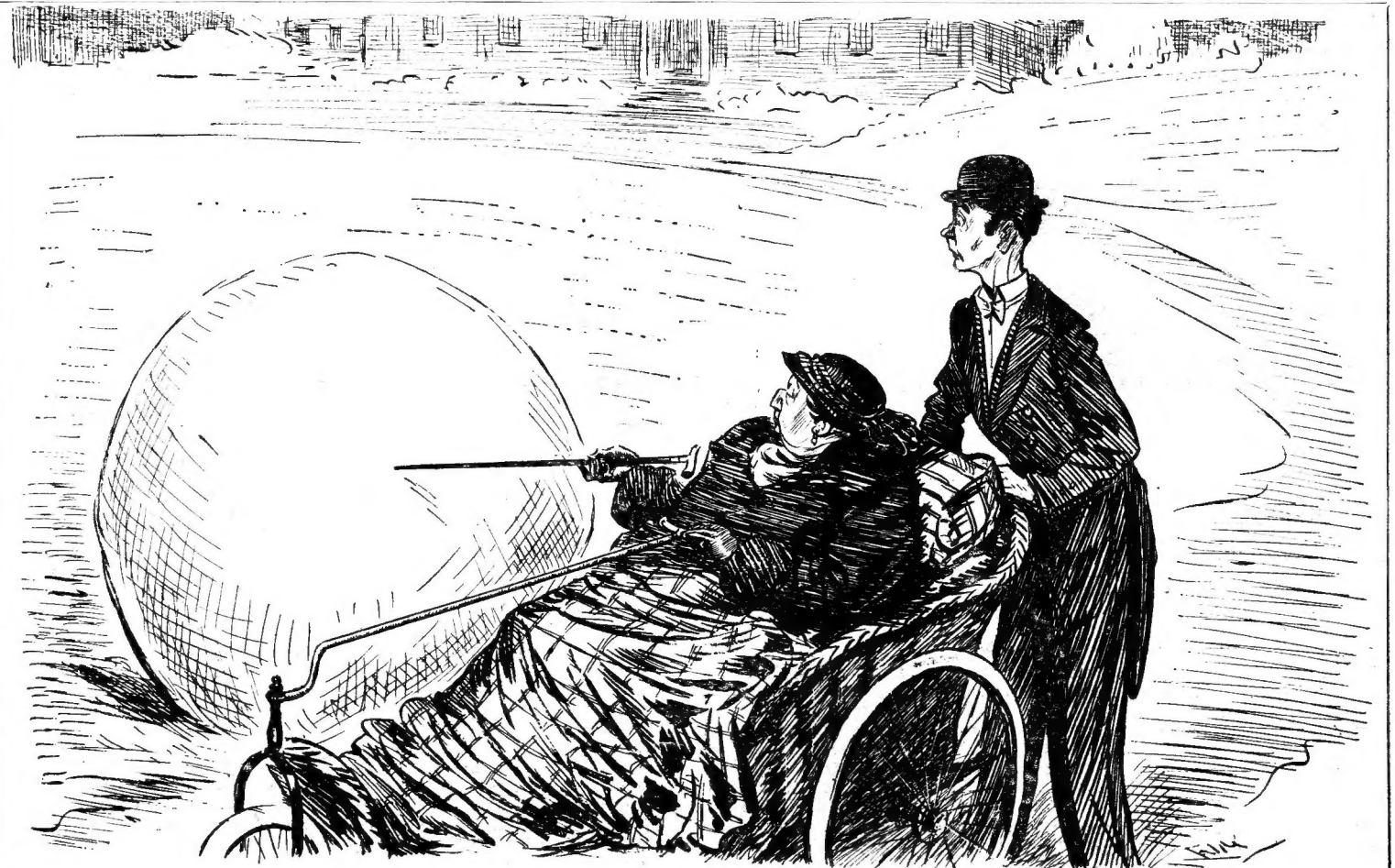
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"Is your wife very economical?"

"Yes, I'm her first husband so far."



"All we want, Mary, is a pint of milk and sixpennyworth of cream, and there's really no need to make a secret about it."



"Thompson, prod about in this. It may be Master Felix."

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

MASTER OF MYSTERY THRILLERS

PENELOPE FURNESS leaned across the table and lifted the telephone receiver to her ear. "Hello!" she said.

A shrill, eager voice with a distinctly Jewish intonation replied.

"Goldman and Company, of Penton Street, Finsbury, speaking. Who was you?"

"I was and I am the manageress of the Furness Enquiry Agency," Penelope answered.

"Don't be fresh, young woman," was the curt retort. "I want to speak to your principal, Miss Penelope Furness."

"Speak on, then. I am Penelope Furness."

The voice at the other end changed its tone. There was a certain amount of respect in the next query.

"You are the young lady who found out who stole those six bales of silk from my nephew, Sam Fink's warehouse?"

"Quite right," Penelope assented. "That was not very difficult."

"You take a taxi, young lady—I will pay—and come to 56, Penton Street, Finsbury, right along. Come straight to my office. Don't speak with no one."

Penelope considered for a moment. Her recent activities had been of a far more exciting character, but she had nothing in view for the moment. An affair of an altogether different type might be interesting as a matter of experience.

"Is the business urgent?" she inquired.

"I am rather full up this morning."

"Urgent!" the voice at the other end exclaimed, quivering with excitement. "I tell you it is tragedy which has happened here! You leave your other business. You come right away. I pay for the taxi."

"Very well. I'll come," she promised.

PENELOPE FURNESS, sole instigator and owner of the newly-launched Furness Enquiry Agency, was without a doubt

handicapped by her looks. She had at different times been likened to Mona Lisa for her smile, to Fra Lippo Lippi's Madonna for the exquisite clearness of her eyes and the transparency of her complexion, and to Viola Tree for the delightfully humorous curve of her lips when she was moved to inward mirth. Notwithstanding the fact that every article of her attire was chosen to conceal rather than exploit her personal charms and that she wore a close-fitting hat simply to hide the colour of her beautiful hair, little Mr. Goldman seated before his large, untidy-looking desk, Rebecca, his daughter, and Geoffrey Brown, salesman of the firm, a blonde young man of gentlemanly appearance, were all struck dumb by her entrance.

Sam Goldman, who was diminutive in stature, afflicted by a slight cast in one eye, and whose whole poise towards life seemed to be apologetic, gazed at her helplessly. The young traveller, whose manners were always above reproach, rose automatically to his feet, but was similarly impressed by her presence. Rebecca, with the eternal egoism of her sex, after a single glance at the newcomer, looked only at the young man opposite to see in what manner he was affected. Penelope announced herself.

"I am Penelope Furness, of the Furness Enquiry Agency. I understand you wish to consult me. Please let me know what the trouble is."

She selected the least dusty of the empty chairs and seated herself calmly a few feet away from the desk. The young man was the first to recover himself.

"You must forgive Mr. Goldman," he begged in a pleasant tone. "He has had rather a shock this morning and, if you will pardon my saying so, he was expecting to see an older, a different sort of lady."

"I am afraid I cannot change my appearance," Penelope replied, coldly. "I may not be very old, but I have had some experience in helping people out of trouble. For instance, Mr. Goldman," she added, turning to him, "it

"I promise that I will not look round," said Penelope as she walked to the far end of the room.

nephew's bales of silk. Now, what can I do for you?"

Sam Goldman groaned. The recollection of his trouble dispelled the momentary paralysis of his senses.

"I scarcely know where to begin," he wailed in a thin, nervous voice. "The shock has been too much. My poor head!" he exclaimed, clapping it between his hands. "Our Christmas trade ruined! Oh dear, oh dear!"

"If you don't mind, sir," the tall young man intervened, "perhaps I had better explain the situation to Miss Furness."

His employer waved his none too clean hand in assent. The young man turned towards the visitor earnestly.

"I know that your time is valuable, Miss Furness," he began. "I will try to be concise. We are manufacturers of ladies' clothing here—perhaps I should say girls' and women's clothing; for we cater for the middle classes—for the great shops who show their wares in the windows. Lately our success has been entirely due to the fact that we have an arrangement with one of the most important French firms to send us over four times during the year copies of their forthcoming designs. It costs us a great deal of money—"

"A fortune," Sam Goldman groaned. "Hundreds and hundreds—"

"—but it has always been worth it," Brown continued. "A few days ago we received in a sealed packet the Christmas designs as usual. We rushed them up into the cutting-room, had a few samples made and I started off—I am traveller for the firm—to see our biggest customer. To-day is Friday. On Tuesday I showed the costumes to one of the most important wholesale men in England. He just looked at me, smiled and shook his head. When I asked him what was the matter, he whistled down a tube, and in a few moments his foreman brought up precisely the same goods as I was offering, cut in exactly the same way to the

is quite true that I found the thief of your

same design. I had to stand still like a fool whilst he told me that he had placed his order the day before with a rival firm."

"Explain the significance of this a little more clearly, please," Miss Furness begged.

"This is the problem," the young man pointed out. "These costumes were cut from the design which came to us in a sealed packet from Paris and which was supposed to have been shown to no one else in England. The designs, from the moment they arrived, were locked in our safe here and taken up by Mr. Goldman himself to the cutting rooms, yet somehow or other they must have been got at and their secret disclosed to another firm of manufacturers. They rushed through samples twenty-four hours ahead of us and cut the ground from under our feet. I might as well be out of business, for it is the same wherever I go—everyone has placed their orders."

Penelope Furness reflected for a moment.

"Could this not possibly be an accident—an intense similarity of design?" she suggested.

"If you were in the trade," Brown assured her, "you would realize the impossibility of such a thing. There are small details in connection with the fall and sweep of the skirt and the loops and hang of the cape which are entirely original. Our designs have been stolen and copied. We have lost our Christmas trade. That is our position."

Sam Goldman looked up. His eyes were red his out-turned lips were quivering.

"If this goes on it will mean ruin, Miss Furness," he groaned. "Our trade is being cut away from under our feet. We have ten thousand pounds' worth of materials to pay for within the next three months and not an order on the books."

Penelope made no comment. She was beginning to develop a faint interest in the situation.

"Are you sure that the firm which supplied you with the coming designs has treated you fairly?" she asked. "Sure, for instance, that they have not themselves supplied the same thing to your competitors?"

(Turn to the Facing Page)



Help for MR. GOLDMAN

(Continued from the Facing Page)

"That is impossible," the young man declared with confidence. "The designs come over in a sealed packet by air; they are met by Mr. Duçane, the firm's agent, who brings them direct to us. The seal is broken here before us all and the designs unrolled."

"Where do you keep the designs until you can get to work upon them?" Penelope asked a little wearily. These preliminaries always bored her. It was only when the stage was set and the psychology of the thing appeared that she was able to find a real interest in her profession. Brown pointed to the safe which stood against the wall. She rose to her feet and, crossing the room, examined it.

"A Bartholomew number five," she murmured in some surprise. "Surely that is one of the best safes in the world."

"What it cost me!" Sam Goldman groaned. "I bought it second-hand but it cost a fortune."

"Who sets the combination and keeps the keys?" Penelope inquired.

"Mr. Goldman himself," Brown confided.

"Do you mind opening it?" she begged.

There was a moment's hesitation. Mr. Goldman stroked his chin. Penelope smiled as she turned her back and walked to the far end of the room.

"I will talk to the young lady," she proposed. "I promise that I will not look round."

"We trust you all right," Mr. Goldman said, rising to his feet and jingling a bunch of keys, "but maybe this is best. The world is full of queer people. When it is open, Miss Furness, you shall examine it."

Penelope looked with some faint interest at the girl who had also risen and was now standing by her side at a remote window. She was pale and anæmic looking, with jet black hair and thin angular figure. Her eyes were the one beautiful feature of her face. They were deep-set, almost black, but clear and brilliant.

"Have you any theory about this, Miss Goldman?" she asked.

The girl, who was looking out of the window fixedly, shook her head.

"How can one have a theory? My father and I alone, and perhaps occasionally Geoffrey, know the combination."

"Is the young man whom you call Geoffrey a relative?"

A very faint streak of colour appeared in the girl's cheeks.

"He is my fiancé," she confided. "We are engaged to be married. Father is very fond of him. He is quite one of the family."

"Your fiancé," Penelope repeated, thoughtfully.

THE girl's eyes seemed to be pleading with her. She was trembling slightly and her voice was not quite steady.

"You think it strange that I should want to marry someone who is not of the same faith?" she queried. "My father is not strict and Geoffrey has been very useful to us in the business. You see, it is difficult for us sometimes. People like my father succeed because they are hard-working and saving, but so many people think that when they do business with Jews they are being taken advantage of. With Geoffrey it is different. All the customers like him. They believe him when he talks about prices. They feel that he is doing his best for them. When he marries me he will be a partner."

"Very nice for him, I should think," Penelope commented, with a smile which she tried to make reassuring.

There was a summons from the other end of the room. Obeying it, Penelope examined the safe with the air of an expert. It really was a very solid and fine piece of work.

"I understand that there are no spare keys?" she persisted.

"Not with us. Only one with the maker and that has never been used," Mr. Goldman confided. "Sometimes on Thursdays there is quite a great deal of money for the wages."

(Turn Overleaf)



Youth (having just been severely snubbed): "I can sympathize with you, old man—I know just what it feels like to have somebody look right through you!"

WHEN some visitors came to the school Betty was the only member of the infants' class who responded when the teacher asked, "Is there any little girl who can recite?"

"Please, teacher, I can!"

"That's a good girl, Betty. Step out in front of the class. Now, what can you say for us?"

"'Nelson's Farewell to His Mother.'"

"Splendid! Well, now, begin."

"Ta-ta, mum!" said Betty, dramatically, waving her hand in the air.

"YES, we spent Christmas motoring on the Continent. It was glorious."

"Motoring abroad, eh? I'll bet you passed some glorious scenery?"

"Oh, we must have done. Why, we averaged four hundred miles a day!"

"ERIC loved a girl called Emma. A month ago he called her 'darling,' three weeks ago he was calling her 'dear,' a fortnight ago he was calling her 'Emma.'"

"What does he say now?"

"Maud!"



**Wife: "They say there's a lot of bad money about this Christmas, George."
Husband: "Well, I've nothing to worry about now!"**

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

(Continued from the
Preceding Page)

One key is enough. I like to know that my money, when it is out of the bank, is safe."

Penelope returned thoughtfully to her chair. Goldman resumed his seat. He watched her anxiously.

"Well?"

She smiled.

"You don't expect me to produce a divining rod and grope my way to the thief, do you?" she asked. "Tell me the name of the firm who seem to have profited by the theft—the firm who supplied your customer."

"Epstein and Jacobs," the young man announced.

"They are a good firm, but tricky," Sam Goldman put in. "Maybe I trust Epstein, but Jacobs—he would rob his own father!"

"Have you any theory as to how they got hold of the design?" Penelope asked bluntly.

"They stole it," was the angry reply. "They are rascals! They have taken all my trade. Mr. Brown here—this time last year he sold eighteen thousand pounds' worth of costumes. This year nothing!"

"How do you suppose your designs came into the hands of Epstein and Jacobs? No one could break into that safe. It has obviously never been tampered with since it was made and you say that you always keep the key in the family."

"How did those designs get stolen?" Sam Goldman demanded, raising his voice despairingly. "How should we know? We send for you to find that out! What do you think, Miss Furness? What do you think now? Tell us."

Penelope smiled.

"I am not a magician," she reminded him. "I will work on your case, if you like, for three days. I shall require ten guineas a day and fifty guineas if I am successful."

Sam Goldman groaned. It was a great deal of money.

"Ten guineas a day!" he expostulated. "My dear young lady, how is it possible for you to spend ten guineas a day?"

"Those are my terms," Penelope repeated. "If you think I am asking too much—"

She rose to her feet. Mr. Goldman rose, too. He beat the table with the palms of his hands.

"You are too impatient, young lady," he cried. "It is a great deal of money you ask,

but we pay. You listen to me—we pay. Maybe you do for me what you did for my nephew."

"I shall do my best," Penelope promised. "If I don't succeed it will only cost you thirty guineas."

"Is there anything more you would like us to explain to you?" Sam Goldman asked. "Here we are—my daughter, Mr. Brown and me—we tell you anything you ask."

"I only want to know one thing at present," Penelope replied. "Tell me the address of Messrs. Epstein and Jacobs."

"Thirteen, Stockton Row," Rebecca announced, looking up from her work.

"They won't tell you anything," Brown prophesied. "They never give any of their business away."

"Very difficult people," Sam Goldman sighed. "You think that you will earn that fifty guineas. Yes?"

Penelope nodded to them all but refused to commit herself.

"I shall do my best," she promised.

ON the third morning after Penelope's visit to Finsbury a note, which arrived by special messenger, was brought in to Mr. Goldman. He read it and frowned.

"It is from Miss Furness, I'm sure," Rebecca declared. "Has she found out anything?"

Her father reached for his hat. He had tucked the note away in his pocket, and he had an uncommunicative air.

"She is not well," he confided. "She thought maybe I would call and see her. I shall be back at twelve o'clock."

"Why don't you let Geoffrey go, father?" Rebecca suggested. "He is more used to those sort of people."

"I go myself," Mr. Goldman repeated, obstinately. "If the young woman has anything to tell she will tell it to me."

The head of the firm took his leave omitting to mention the fact that the note which he had received stipulated that he should come himself to the FURNESS ENQUIRY AGENCY and not send any representative. He caught his bus, resisted the temptation to expend a penny on a morning paper, in due course reached the Strand, and, mounting two flights of stairs, presented himself at Penelope's tiny domicile in Maynell Street. He looked around him in wonder as he was

shown into the small room, half study, half office. There was nothing except the telephone and a large desk of severe appearance to indicate that business was transacted in this very feminine-looking apartment. Mr. Goldman felt his pulses tingle nervously as he sat on the edge of his chair swinging his hat in his hand.

"Well?" he exclaimed, eagerly. "You have found out something—yes?"

"Nothing whatever," Penelope confessed.

Sam Goldman was thunderstruck.

"What!" he cried, in a changed tone. "You find out nothing at all? You take ten guineas a day—thirty guineas—and find out nothing! Have you brought me all this way just to tell me that?"

"I am not quite so unreasonable as you seem to think," Penelope reassured him, smiling. "In the first place I am not going to charge you one penny for the present. That's good news, isn't it?"

Goldman was vastly relieved. His one sound eye twinkled.

"Very good news indeed," he admitted, cautiously. "How could you charge, though, when you have found out nothing?"

"You say you get these sets of designs four times a year," she remarked. "When is the next lot due?"

"In March," Goldman replied. "They will be for the spring styles. But what is the good? They will only be stolen again."

She nodded.

"They probably will, but this time I shall be able to produce the thief."

"How do you know that?" he demanded, eyeing her shrewdly.

Penelope smiled.

"Perhaps I have not been altogether so unsuccessful as I appear to have been," she confessed. "I have had a talk with Mr. Ducane, the agent of your French firm, and I have made friends with Mr. Jacobs, the buyer at Epstein's. My information department, too, has been at work and I know something about these people. At the present moment I could guess how your designs came into the hands of Epstein and Jacobs and I should probably be right."

"But why not tell me—tell me quick?" Goldman exclaimed, mopping his forehead.

She shook her head.

"I have no proof," she told him, "and I do not work without proof. I think I can produce the thief during the first week of April and before he has done you any further harm."

Sam Goldman sighed deeply. He could not conceal his disappointment.

"That is very clever of you," he said, sarcastically. "What about all the cloth I bought for the Christmas styles? What am I going to do with my workpeople and my machinery? What about paying my bills when they come due with no sales in the book? Do you think I am made of money?"

"You want my advice?" Penelope asked.

"What else do I pay for?" Goldman demanded, apparently forgetful of the fact that so far he had paid nothing.

"Well, here it is," she continued. "I can quite understand that your ordinary Christmas trade is ruined. You are second in the market instead of being first. Still, you must do something with the material. You have the machinery and you have the workpeople. You have the designs, too, even though they have been copied. Make up the costumes and sell them, if you must, without a profit."

"Without a profit," Goldman groaned, wincing as though in agony. "What nonsense you talk, young lady. You suggest to a business man that he sells without a profit. Is that your fine advice? Do people pay you for telling them things like that?"

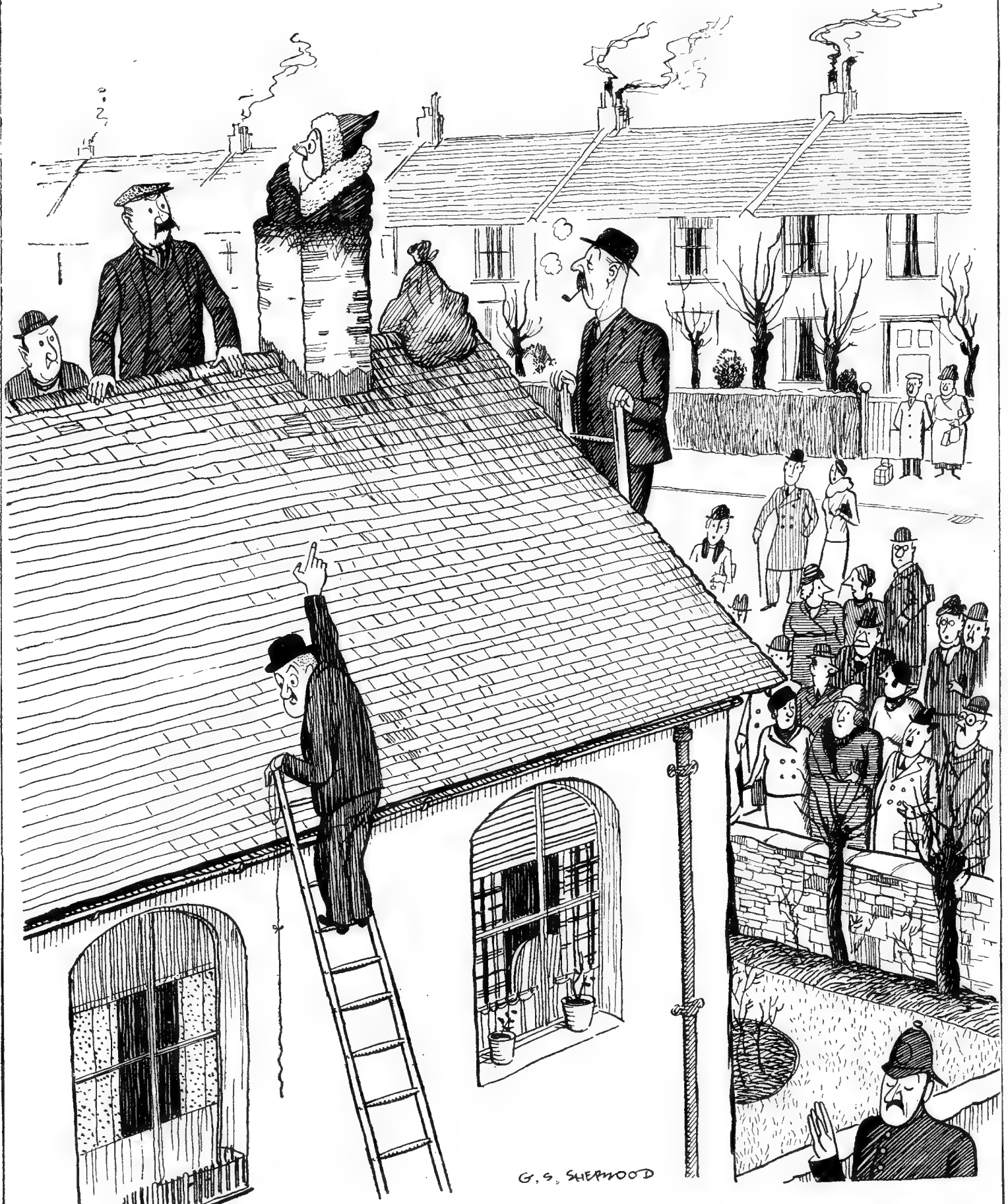
"Only for three months," she reminded him gently. "In that way you pay your bills, you keep your workpeople employed, and I expect there is always a little departmental profit to be made. Anyhow, you keep the factory going and after next quarter I don't think anyone will steal your designs again."

"You tell me the name of the thief now," he begged, with a sudden change of front.

(Turn to Page 10)



Wife (to husband, victim of motor accident): "But, darling, it seems such a pity for us to miss the Fancy Dress Ball. Couldn't you go as an Egyptian mummy, instead of Charles the First?"



"I'm so sorry to give you fellows all this trouble, but the fact is my wife would insist on my playing Father Christmas properly—now here I am firmly wedged."



E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

(Continued from Page 8)

"After all, you have been working for me. You tell me what you think."

She shook her head very firmly indeed. "I should never do that," she told him. "I take no account of suspicions. If I accuse anyone I

produce the proof."

Sam Goldman groaned. Three months' work and no profit. Yet it was good advice—he knew that. Not advice to be paid for, but good of its sort. He rose reluctantly to his feet.

"You tell me in the office and let your friends believe that I have failed completely," she advised him.

"So you have," he snapped. Penelope only smiled.

SAM GOLDMAN, when he had once made up his mind to the ghastly exploit of selling without a profit, rather enjoyed those next three months. His competitors, even his old friend, Aaron Sachs, were furious with him.

"Ruin," the latter declared angrily one evening, when the two men met in a teashop, "is what you are asking for. You cut the market so no one can live. You sell that costume for forty-two shillings what costs forty shillings before it leaves the bench. It is not honest trading, Sam. The bankruptcy court is where you will end."

Goldman sucked up his tea noisily.

"You want too much profit, Aaron," he said, with a soothing note in his tone. "Wait till the next models are here. Maybe I shall put up my prices then."

"Listen, Samuel," his old friend implored him. "Let me look at your costings. I can show you where you are wrong. It is that smart young salesman of yours who is doing the mischief. I tell you no one can sell at your prices. You will fail, Samuel."

Goldman smiled cryptically. He laid his hand upon the arm of the man whom he had known and loved since boyhood.

"Aaron," he reminded him. "There was a manufacturer not so far from us two now, a manufacturer whose name was not so unlike Aaron Sachs, who never had any money until after he had failed."

Aaron Sachs, who was a fat man, wiped his forehead vigorously.

"If my own brother had said that to me, Samuel," he declared, "I should have called him a liar. . . ."

Even Geoffrey Brown, although his work was made easy for him, grumbled.

"I shall never be able to get prices up again, Mr. Goldman," he told his prospective father-in-law, gloomily. "Everyone says we have gone mad. We sell our winter models too cheap."

"If you can make better prices, make them," was the prompt reply. "What do you want? You would like me to keep all that cloth, turn away half my hands, do no business, and ask to have my bills renewed just because Epstein and Jacobs got my designs and stole my customers. I'll show those people something!"

"You have shown them something already," the young man remarked, disconsolately. "Sidney Jacobs won't speak to me now. He thinks we are doing this out of spite."

"Maybe we are, my son," Goldman sighed. "Maybe we are crazy."

"That's what people are beginning to say."

Samuel Goldman chuckled. His unpopularity afforded him a sort of savage satisfaction.

ABOUT a week before the time appointed for the delivery of the spring designs by Mr. Ducane, Miss Rebecca Goldman rang the bell of Penelope's small flat and was promptly admitted. Penelope received her kindly, ordered tea and did her best to make her visitor feel at ease. It was obvious, however, that the latter was anxious and upset.

"I got your note, Miss Furness," she said, after a nervous pause, "and, as you see, I have come along. I cannot think even now, though, what you want with me."

"You have done what I asked?" Penelope inquired.

"Yes. I came and I told no one. But what do you want?"

Penelope took note of the girl's hollow cheeks, her over-brilliant eyes and her general restlessness of mien.

"I am afraid you are not very well, Miss Goldman," she said, sympathetically.

"There's nothing the matter with me," was the hasty reply.

"You are not overworked?"

The girl shook her head.

"Just now there is very little work to do."

"You are waiting for Mr. Ducane to bring you the spring designs, I suppose?"

"Yes," Rebecca answered, a little faintly.

"Did your father ever tell you what I promised him?" Penelope asked.

"No."

"I promised him that when Mr. Ducane arrived this time I would tell him who had taken his Christmas designs from the safe, had them copied, and replaced."

"Why do you tell me this, Miss Furness? What do you mean?"

Penelope moved her chair and laid her hand on her visitor's shoulder.

"Miss Rebecca," she confided, "You see, I have found out who removed the designs and who copied them. I want to talk to you about it."

In Rebecca's deep eyes there was the terrified

CHRISTMAS IN THE AIR

FULL soon it will be quite the rule

To wing the wide seas over,

And spend a sunny, summer Yule

In South Australian clover;

Since distance will not trouble us,

Though half the earth may sunder,

We'll board an Airway's Omnibus

And visit our friends Down Under.

Should Christmas bring no frost or snow,

For skating, lugeing, skiing,

We'll mount our private 'planes and go

Where winter is in being;

Alaska, Greenland, Hudson Bay,

Or any other nice land,

Or spend a seasonable day

No farther off than Iceland.

But, if the East should be preferred

Where Christmas first was mentioned,

It will not seem at all absurd,

But kind and well-intentioned,

To fly our children to the spot

Where shepherds still are roaming,

Although they have no part or lot

With angels in the gloaming.

For rather than be bored to death

In Kensington or Tooting,

Non-stop to Suva, Nazareth,

To Kenya for some shooting,

Though lacking puddings and mince-pies,

There can be little question,

Would give us much more exercise

And much less indignation.

A. B. C.

look of a hunted animal. She was incapable of speech.

"Geoffrey never stole the designs," she exclaimed, breathlessly.

"No, but you did," Penelope told her. "Four or five times, I think, within the last few years, but never so flagrantly as on this last occasion. You took the designs from the safe on Saturday when, as you know, your father would never cross the threshold of his factory. The young man had them copied and they were back again before sunset. It was he who sold the copies to Epstein and Jacobs."

"He did it for my sake—for both our sakes," Rebecca sobbed, twisting up her handkerchief in her fingers. "What you say is true. I stole the designs this last time and I have copied them before when it was not so important."

"Why did you do this?" Penelope asked.

"Because Geoffrey and I want to be married," the girl declared, passionately, "and father is too mean about the money. Why do you interfere, Miss Furness? It's not your business."

"Isn't it?" Penelope remarked, smiling.

"I rather think that it is. However, listen to me. I don't want to do you any harm. I would rather help you than stand in the way."

"You mean it?" the girl asked, feverishly.

"I do," Penelope assured her. "I think you are foolish, but then we are all foolish once in our lives."

"Are you going to tell father?"

"In my own way, in my own time I may let him guess," Penelope admitted. "Do you believe in me, Miss Goldman?"

"Yes," the girl faltered.

"If you want to get out of this trouble," Penelope continued, "will you do exactly what I say?"

"Yes."

"Very well then. Mr. Ducane will pay his usual visit to your office next Friday. Have you promised Mr. Brown to copy the patterns?"

"I think—he expects me to. But, of course—"

"Listen to me," Penelope interrupted. "Mr. Ducane will present the designs. Your father will study them. They will be sealed up as usual presumably until Monday morning. You will go down to the office—as you have done before—on Saturday, you will make copies of the designs, and you will pass them on to Mr. Brown without repeating a single word of our conversation."

"Do you mean that I am to go on doing this?" the girl cried, bewildered.

"Just once more. Afterwards I hope that I shall be able to persuade your father to arrange for your marriage."

"If you can only do that," Rebecca pleaded, passionately. "If you can only do that! There is nothing in the world that either of us want so much."

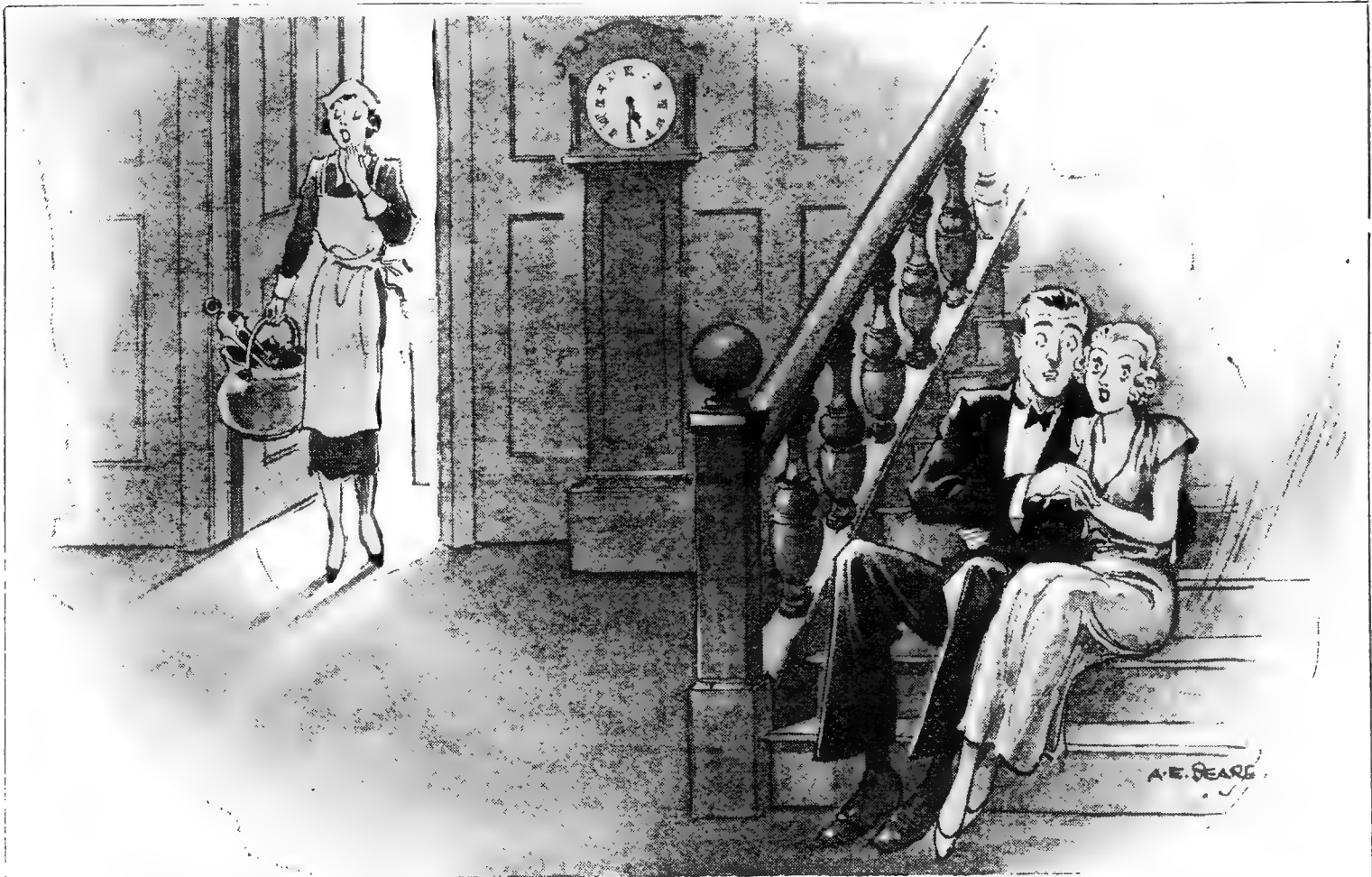
"What you have to do," Penelope reminded her with an encouraging smile, "is not very difficult, and if you do it I think I can promise you that you will be married before many months have passed."

A FEW days later a somewhat angry manufacturer of ladies' clothing climbed the same stairs and was admitted into the studio office of the Furness Enquiry Agency. Penelope, who seldom shook hands with anybody, motioned him at once to a chair. He sat on its edge, twiddling his hat in his hands and retained his overcoat.

"You may be a very clever young woman, Miss Furness," Sam Goldman began impetuously, "but you try to treat me as though I were a big fool. I am a good business man. I find my way through the world quite all right. Why should you be the one to decide how much you shall tell me of my own affairs and how much you shall keep to yourself?"

"Mr. Goldman," she begged, "put your hat down on the floor, please. Thank you. Now listen. It is a very difficult thing to give advice and to help other people, and you can only do it if they are able and willing to help themselves."

(Turn to the Facing Page)



"D-d'you think it's the ghost, Eric? I swear I heard footsteps and a clanging sound—and it *must* be getting late!"

(Continued from the Facing Page)

I always have to explain that to my clients. You must have confidence in me."

"That's all very well——"

"Wait," Penelope interrupted. "I told you only three months ago that I thought if you were patient until this week I could stop your new designs getting into the wrong hands, and if you insisted upon knowing I could explain to you how it has happened that your secrets have leaked out. Very well, I know now that I can keep my word, but I must do it my own way."

"What do you call your own way?" Sam Goldman asked, suspiciously.

"You will receive Mr. Ducane on Friday afternoon as usual, but he will arrive an hour late. It will be half-past six when he comes. You will accept his packet and you will lock it in your safe after a brief examination. You will call and see me on Sunday—at this time—and from then on, with the exception of one or two small details, everything will explain itself."

"And how do I know that my designs will not be stolen again?" Sam Goldman demanded.

"You must take my word for it."

"And when shall I know who stole them last time?"

Penelope considered.

"How long does it take you to make the two or three sample costumes which Mr. Brown takes out to get his big orders from?"

"Forty-eight hours," the clothing manufacturer replied.

"On Wednesday or Thursday then of the following week."

Sam Goldman deliberated for several moments. His lips were pursed, his fingers—an old trick—seemed to have the inclination to stroke his nose. He was in a state of uncertainty.

"I have told you all that it is necessary for you to know at this moment, Mr. Goldman,"

Penelope assured him. "Believe me, the rest of the affair is very much better arranged by someone outside."

"But how are you able to get to know about my affairs?" Mr. Goldman inquired. "You sit here in your little parlour all the time. How do you do it? Make guesses?"

Penelope smiled.

"If I do they are generally good ones," she conceded, "but, of course, I have to have help. If you like to know I will tell you that I have connections with a very excellent detective agency and through them I have been in touch with Mr. Ducane and two members of other firms in your particular line of business. I can tell you one or two things about people whom you know which may surprise you presently. I shall earn my money all right, Mr. Goldman."

He picked up his hat and nodded.

"I trust you," he announced. "I think you are one smart girl."

Somewhat later than his accustomed time in the afternoon Mr. Ducane, dapper and smart as usual, was ushered into the office where Samuel Goldman, Rebecca, and Mr. Geoffrey Brown were eagerly awaiting him. There was a little chorus of greetings and they all gathered round the table whilst Mr. Ducane broke the seals of the parcel he was carrying.

"This time," he confided, "I met the aeroplane at Croydon. I have come straight from there."

"Any particular change in the styles?" Geoffrey Brown asked.

"More changes than I expected," the agent replied. "You will find several small surprises."

"We will have just one look—one quick look," Mr. Goldman declared, excitedly. "It is a bad day you come late, Ducane, on Friday. I finish work when the sun sets. Never mind, just a glance at the number one costume then we lock everything away until Monday morning."

The agent undid the parcel and drew off the

tissue paper. Mr. Goldman held up the design and unfolded a pattern. The young man's lips pursed in a whistle.

"Heavens!" he exclaimed. "Shorter! And everybody said the skirts were to be longer. Look at the new bodice, too. High neck, after all; and if there's not a belt!"

"Marvellously chic," Ducane said, reverently.

"Takes your breath away at first," Sam Goldman admitted, covering over the pattern, "but it's what they asked for. It's something new. No one sha'n't cut in this time on us! We start work at six o'clock Monday morning. Your appointment was for Wednesday, Geoffrey, eh?"

"Nine-thirty at Lessingham's—with the boss himself," the young man announced. "Very few travellers get anywhere near him nowadays."

"I shall go with you myself," Sam Goldman decided. "Very polite Mr. Lessingham will think it after our little dispute a few months ago. Now—if your please——"

He pushed them out of the way, deposited the packet in the safe, locked it with great care and rattled the keys in his pocket. Then he picked up his hat.

"Close up, Rebecca," he directed. "Come along, Mr. Ducane and Geoffrey. I don't like that any light shall burn in here on Friday night. Are you coming home to supper with us, young man?"

Geoffrey Brown hesitated.

"Rebecca and I rather thought of a cinema——"

"You come right along," his prospective father-in-law insisted. "We may talk a little business and you and Rebecca can have your walk or go to the cinema afterwards."

"Very good, sir," the young man replied, meekly.

(Turn Overleaf)

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

(Continued from the
Preceding Page)

THAT Wednesday morning appointment was Sam Goldman's hour of triumph. Mr. Randolph Lessingham, the head of the great firm, received them with exceptional consideration.

"I trust that we are going to be more fortunate than last time, Mr. Goldman," he said. "I have only seen one design for the spring season, and I don't mind telling you that I am not touching it. Now let's have a look at yours."

Geoffrey Brown had already started to unfasten the strap of the box. He was looking puzzled and his fingers were shaking. His employer watched him keenly.

"My young man," he apologized, "is not quite himself this morning. Too excited you get, Geoffrey. You see a big sale coming—you should take it coolly, as I do. Remember that big sales aren't everything in the world. When we sell to a house like Lessingham's there is very little profit to be made. . . . There you are, Mr. Lessingham. Was there ever an artist turned out a finer design than that, or a manufacturer better quality goods?"

Mr. Sam Goldman was in his element. He

held up the model. Geoffrey, who was watching, appeared to be thunderstruck.

"Heavens!" he exclaimed. "The skirt is longer! That coat—it didn't seem cut like that to me on Friday."

"The goods are better than the design," Sam Goldman declared, cheerfully.

Mr. Lessingham called in his partner. They whispered together for several moments, shook out the costumes and held them at every possible angle. Finally, the head of the firm turned to his visitor.

"Mr. Goldman," he said, "I congratulate you. This time you are on top. I am going to do big business with you."

Sam Goldman chuckled.

"I knew it, Mr. Lessingham," he exclaimed. "No one gets what we get. Just now and then we may miss it, but not often."

"How many costumes can you turn out per week?"

"A thousand in assorted colours and materials."

"Very good," Mr. Lessingham decided. "I take you on for three months."

Sam Goldman gave a little gasp.

"Fourteen thousand costumes, we may as

well call it, in round numbers. My buyer shall go round and select the various materials. We will take the price you have marked here as the basis for the tweeds and we will adjust the other prices according to the quality of the material we choose. Is it a deal?"

It was very much a deal. Mr. Lessingham rang for his contract clerk and typist. Geoffrey Brown was fanning himself at the window. A crisis of one sort had passed without a doubt, but he understood now that furious stream of telephone calls and the urgent desire for his presence at the premises of Messrs. Epstein and Jacobs.

IT was certainly Mr. Sam Goldman's day. He showed an unexpected firmness when his young companion tried to escape, if only for half an hour.

"A business conference," he announced. "That's what we are going to have directly we get back to the office. Afterwards you go where you like."

Geoffrey Brown, who was not looking forward with any particular pleasure to his interview with Epstein and Jacobs, assented without demur! The conference consisted of Penelope Furness, Rebecca, Sam Goldman, and Geoffrey himself. From the first, Sam Goldman, who seemed to have taken to himself a new dignity, dominated the gathering. He spoke more slowly than usual, and there was an unfamiliar gravity in his tone.

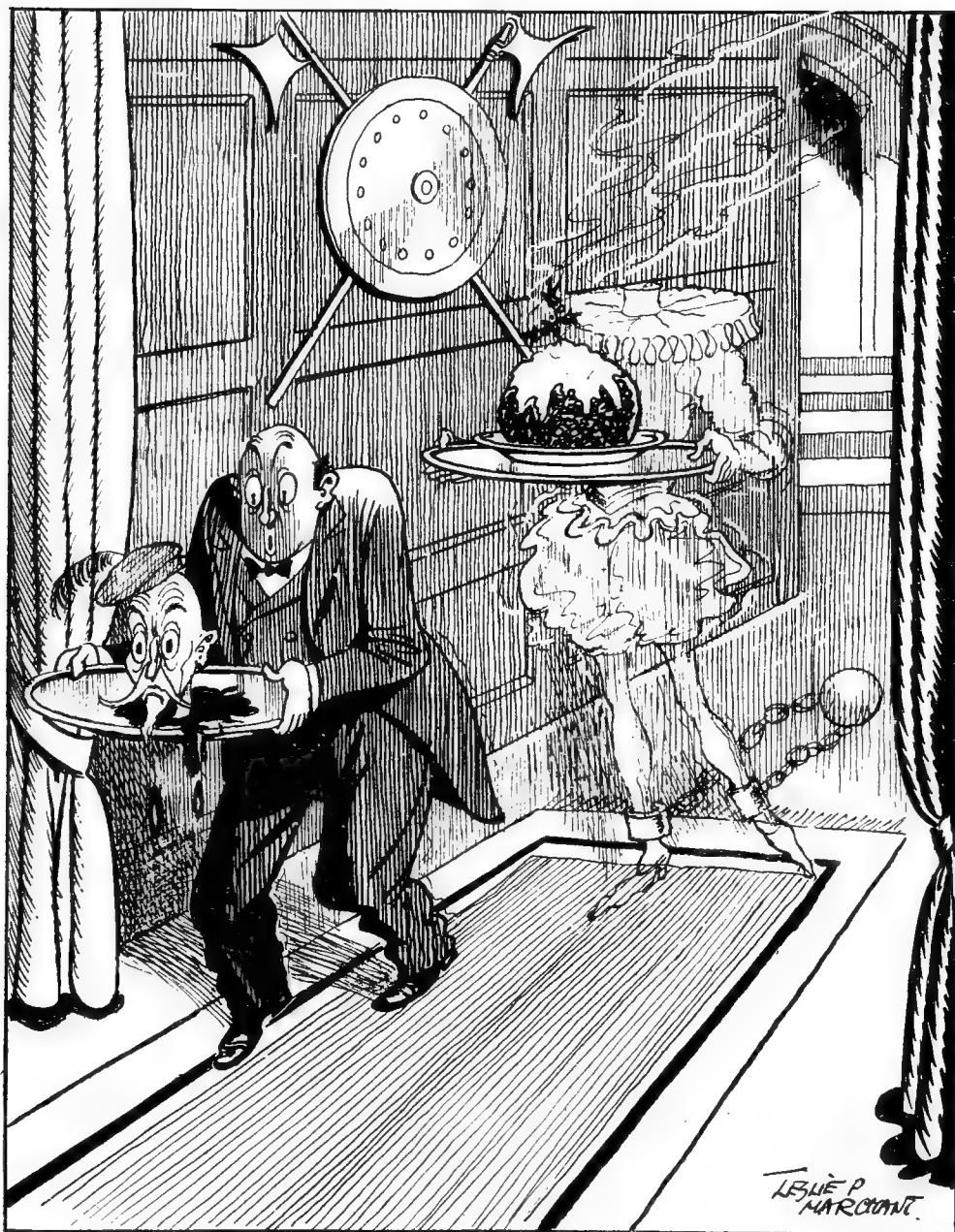
"You two, Rebecca and Geoffrey, you have got to listen to me carefully," he began. "All that I say has been put into my head by this young lady," pointing to Penelope, "but I think she sees the world better than we see it sometimes. Three months ago there came about a great disaster when our designs were stolen from that safe. Someone sold them to Epstein and Jacobs and I lost my trade. I sent for this young lady, Miss Penelope Furness. She did not make any rash promises, but she just talked good common sense. What she said was do not sit down and fret, use up the cloth you have got to pay for, and when the time comes for the next designs to arrive, maybe I can do something for you. I did what she told me. Last Friday our friend Mr. Ducane he had two packages of designs. One he left with this young lady until Sunday, the other he brought here. The one he brought here went into my safe, and maybe someone has had it out and copied it this week-end. If they did it won't do them any good. It was a very bad design—even Epstein and Jacobs could not make for themselves good sales with a design like that!"

No one spoke. Geoffrey Brown, who was something of a coward, was ghastly pale. Rebecca's great eyes reflected some of the horror which she was feeling.

"This may seem funny what I am going to say," Sam Goldman went on. "Just at first I did not see it like I do now, but this young lady she talked to me, and I think she is right. I don't want no trouble. Rebecca, she is my only daughter. You, Geoffrey—I am fond of you really like a son, although sometimes you do get a trifle impatient. Perhaps I have loved too much to keep my money to myself. There's a time when a father must spend. I forgot. Now, you listen. I don't want to know who took that design. I want you two to get married next week. When that's all agreed we will go somewhere and drink a bottle of wine to the biggest order the firm has ever had and maybe one small change in the name."

Mr. Goldman was embarrassed by the attentions he received. Rebecca's cheek was pressed to his, the young man was grasping his unoccupied hand in fervent and desperate gratitude. Mr. Goldman's one sound eye was moist.

"Now, now, now," he expostulated. "That's all right. That's settled. We'll never think of it again. All gone. Rebecca, you get my cheque book. You write out a cheque to Miss Furness for eighty guineas—thirty expenses, fifty for the job. And I tell you this, young lady," he wound up, emphatically. "You tell me you have got some clever helpers behind you. Maybe you have, but you find me another as clever as yourself and I make her a partner too, see!"



THE MISTAKE.

FRIENDS OF THE FAMILY

MR. MUMMERY said right. The matter should have his prompt and careful attention, and on Wednesday next there would be delivered to my door one large holly bush, complete with berries. . . . After dark for preference. . . . Five bob, and no questions asked.

"And I suppose," said Mr. Mummery, "I suppose you don't happen to be wanting a nice plump bird. . . . No, I was afraid not. Fixed up already, I expect. All the same, if you should hear of anybody that's on the look-out for a bargain—Twenty pounds if he's an ounce, a chest on him like Carnera's, fond of children, and answers to the name of Adolphe."

"I've been stuffing that bird ever since last August; feeding him on the fat of the land; and now, just when he's simply busting to be slaughtered, I've got to get rid of him. Otherwise I shall have the family laid up after Christmas with heart trouble."

"Ah, well, it's my own silly fault," sighed Mr. Mummery. "I ought to have known. I ought to have learnt my lesson years ago, when we had Benjamin and Jeremy; but I didn't."

"Benjamin and Jeremy was rabbits, so called after somebody in a book that the kids was reading; and they lived in a hutch at the bottom of the garden. For two nights only. Then the youngsters spotted them, and that did it."

Benjamin and Jeremy had to have a box in the kitchen close to the fire if it happened to be chilly; and a nice little warm blanket, and some nice hot bren-milk for supper, and a nice game of hide-and-seek on the hearthrug before going to bed.

"All very well, of course, but you can't fat up rabbits on hide-and-seek. It's too exciting; too much like work. And what with being chivvied all over the house by young Millie and Mary and Maggie, and racing up and down stairs, and playing Noah's Ark in the bedroom, and going into the cupboard two by two, in about three months those rabbits wasn't worth skinning."

"Worn to a shadow, they was, and as thin as rakes. As to eating 'em—Well, you'd have got more nourishment out of a greyhound pup. And I'd been looking forward to those rabbits; Benjamin in a pie, and Jeremy done in the saucepan, with onions and a bit of pickled pork."

"So in the end I had to give 'em away. Birthday present for the wife's sister. And she wrote back and told us that she'd had to boil Benjamin for three days before she could get him apart."

"The next thing I tried," said Mr. Mummery, "was chicken. Thought a few pullets might help to make both ends meet like, and bought a dozen to start with."

"Well, you know how kids are with chickens, especially when they're little and yellor and fluffy. Couldn't even get 'em to come in to meals, leave alone go up to bed. And, of course, they all had to have names."

"There was Tiggy and Wiggy, Elsie and Doris Waters, and Gracie

Fields, and Mrs. Buggins, and Gran'ma; all the lot of 'em. And when Gracie laid her first egg it had to be divided into five, so's they could all have a bit."

"But when it came to making a profit on the deal—nothing doing! And as soon as I said anything about having Gran'ma on Sunday, with a few sausages to eke her out and help her to go round, there was pretty nearly a riot. . . . I forget what happened to 'em in the end. Old age, I fancy."

"After that I thought I'd go in for something they wouldn't fall in love with; something ugly. So I bought a pig; a little pink and black sow about six weeks old."

"That was where I made a mistake. I ought to have got hold of a middle-aged one. One that snored and dribbled. Then they wouldn't have taken any notice of it. As it was, this little blighter had teeny little eyes, and it squeaked like a doll, and rolled on-its back, and used to let them scratch it for hours on end."

"I forget what they called her—Ducky-Doodlums, or something like that—and she certainly put on weight all right. Used to have half the youngsters' grub as well as her own, and if you didn't watch her she'd chew up the pie-dish as well."

"However, I wasn't having any silly

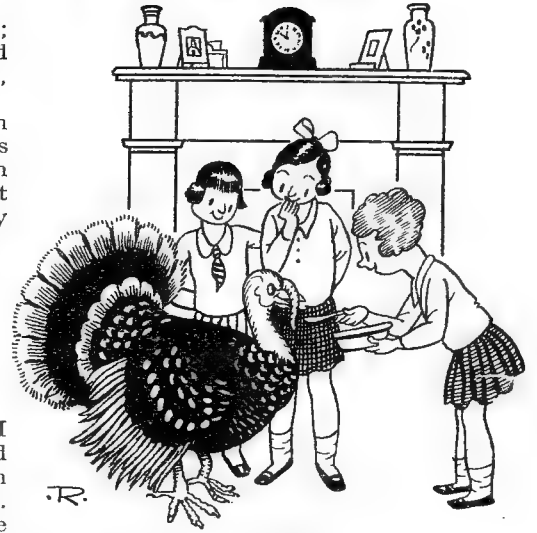
By **F. W. Thomas**
The Famous Humorist of the 'Star'

nonsense this time, and in due course Ducky-Doodlums went down to Mr. Shackels', the butcher, to be hung, drawn, and quartered."

"But I had to eat most of her myself," said Mr. Mummery. "The others wouldn't touch her. Sat round the table on the Sunday—that was when we had the spare rib, with apple sauce and roast potatoes—sat round looking as miserable as if they'd lost a favourite aunt. And this one was sniffing, and that one was snuffling, and the other one was saying she wasn't hungry and didn't feel at all well."



"I had to eat most of her myself"



That bird lives like a prince

"And when I asked 'em who'd have a slice of Ducky-Doodlums, that did it. Maggie went upstairs and cried her eyes out, and Milly was very near sick, and all they'd touch was the pudden. And I had to eat pork for best part of three weeks."

"And now it's Adolphe. . . . He's called after some johnny on the pictures that Mary's a bit gone on, and, believe me, that bird lives like a prince. Cake with every meal, porridge for breakfast, and if they think he's having a nice sleep they switch off the wireless and walk about on tip-toe."

"And I thought I was being clever with Adolphe. Brought him home at dead of night, shoved him down the far end of the garden in an old shed, and never said a word about him for days. But they found him out at last."

"But I told 'em straight this time; there was to be no hanky-panky, or lovey-ducky, or anything like that. This bird, I said, was to eat on Christmas Day, and if we didn't have him we wouldn't have any."

"But it never made any difference," said Mr. Mummery. "In about a fortnight he was in the front parlour, being fed with a spoon and having his feet manicured, and now there's the deuce to pay."

"Mary says she simply hates turkey, and Milly thinks it makes her bilious, and Maggie says she simply couldn't. It'd be like eating one of the family."

"Anyway, Mister Adolphe has got to go, and if I don't twist his neck somebody else will. I can't afford to run an animal's workhouse just because the kids have been brought up to be fond of animals. It's too expensive. So if you should happen to hear of anybody that's looking for a nice, well-brought-up bird, fond of children and clean about the house—"

"But I'll tell you what's worrying me," said Mr. Mummery. "One of these days they'll start falling in love with the taters and sprouts; then we shall all starve to death."

F. W. Thomas Writes in "Tit-Bits" Every Week



"Ja—I have kom," beamed the horror.

IT was Christmas morn, and I was alone. My wife had wished me a new year, and was having her merry Christmas with an old school friend.

Someone knocked on the door. At least, they did not sound to be knocking, so much as having an excellent try to batter their way through the panels.

I threw on a dressing-gown, and charged madly downstairs, pocketing a few valuables in a frantic effort to salvage something before the fire really took hold.

The thundering increased.

"Stand clear," I roared, and flung open the door.

A blast of violent heliotrope hurled me backwards. Slowly it took form and resolved itself into an enormous girl. A mane of flaxen hair topped a face with an area and expression of the Gobi desert.

One massive hand toyed with a trunk. The other held a sprig of mistletoe.

"I have kom!" announced the apparition.

"I beg your pardon," I gurgled.

"Ja," grinned the apparition.

PUSHING past me, she shunted into the hall. Never have I seen so much girl in one piece. She took off her hat and produced a crumpled letter. Dizzily I read it.

"Darling,—This will introduce Katerina. She is Mrs. Blenkinsop's Dutch maid. Mrs. Blenkinsop is away for Christmas, and I thought it would be pleasant for you to have Katerina to look after you. She comes from a respectable Dutch family and really enjoys an old-fashioned Christmas. Look after her till I get home.—Peg."

Trust my wife.

"So you are Katerina?" I tried to smile.

"Ja—I have kom," beamed the horror.

Suddenly she held the mistletoe at the present and began to advance with awful purpose. I screamed and backed into the kitchen.

"In my coountry with the mislebrautch we kuss," she explained. She caught me halfway over the garden fence and we with the mislebrautch did kuss!

At that moment my neighbour, Hilary Snurde, O.B.E., looked over the fence, and Katerina, with a baritone giggle, kissed him with the mislebrautch!

"It's a little Dutch maid I'm minding for Christmas," I shouted.

KATERINA COMES for CHRISTMAS

By
DENIS DUNN

"Well, call her off," whimpered Hilary Snurde, O.B.E., because Katerina showed every sign of being about to scale the fence with the mislebrautch.

Suddenly she stopped dead and announced, "I the Christmas dinner will make. Ja."

I showed her the kitchen.

Katerina began by cutting a pound of sausages into little bits. Then she placed the bits on a chair. Then she sat on the bits.

"I forget—ja, I forget that I not them at the back of my mind had," she explained, pleasantly.

I pointed out as delicately as possible where she had them, and stood clear.

She broke an egg and then gazed with interest down her bodice.

"Him slip have," she announced. I retired hurriedly, because to all appearances Katerina was about to begin a systematic search for the egg.

TWENTY minutes later her head appeared round the door, and she remarked, "Enter once again—I decent am."

Katerina was stuffing a turkey. She was booming a Dutch Christmas carol which goes something like:—

"Gogglebrauth van Blunerwort,
Ja Ja Ja Ja!"

"Nein, nein, nein, nein," I screamed, because Katerina seemed to have mistaken the interior of the wretched bird for a general parking place and dump.

Ten empty tins were beside her, and she was emptying half a bottle of old brandy into the craw.

"Goot," smiled Katerina, and, to my horror, lifted up the turkey and drank my health in it!

"Oh gogglebrauth dei slepndruth,
Gug Gug Gug Gug!"

she chanted.

Then she picked up the turkey and approached the oven. Now, ours is one of those new ovens. You open Valve A until pointer B coincides with jet C, then you light jet G and run like merry H.

My last coherent memory is the sight of an heliotrope stern disappearing into the interior of the oven. Then a match was lit.

When Hilary Snurde, O.B.E., cleared away the

wreckage, and I got the blaze under control, we looked round for Katerina.

"She's gone!" gasped Snurde.

"Vanished!" gasped.

"I am 'ere," announced a sepulchral voice from the heavens.

Katerina had landed on top of the dish cupboard.

"Brandy, quick!" ordered Hilary Snurde, so I passed up the turkey.

Katerina took a deep draught, and a warm glow stole over her sable face.

She began to sing a weird dirge about a "Goot King Wenceslashcimer" and, descending slowly from the cupboard top, danced three times round the kitchen and ended up with her arms round Hilary Snurde's neck.

"I lof you," she said, simply.

A carol singer outside obliged with "Rest you merry, gentlemen; may nothing you dismay," and Hilary Snurde followed him with a coke-hammer for half a mile at full speed to thank him.

WE locked Katerina in the box-room, and I got a tin-opener and cooked my Christmas dinner. I had just taken my first mouthful when the door-bell rang. Outside were two policemen, a fire engine, 235 errand boys, a "crippled from birth" who had run for help, nine perfect strangers—and my wife.

"Look," said my wife in an awful voice, and pointed aloft.

Descending slowly by a rope made from three heliotrope petticoats was Katerina.

She was muttering in Dutch something about, "The Turkey poof bang go—the man in room me lock have. I kom, I kom."

I went.

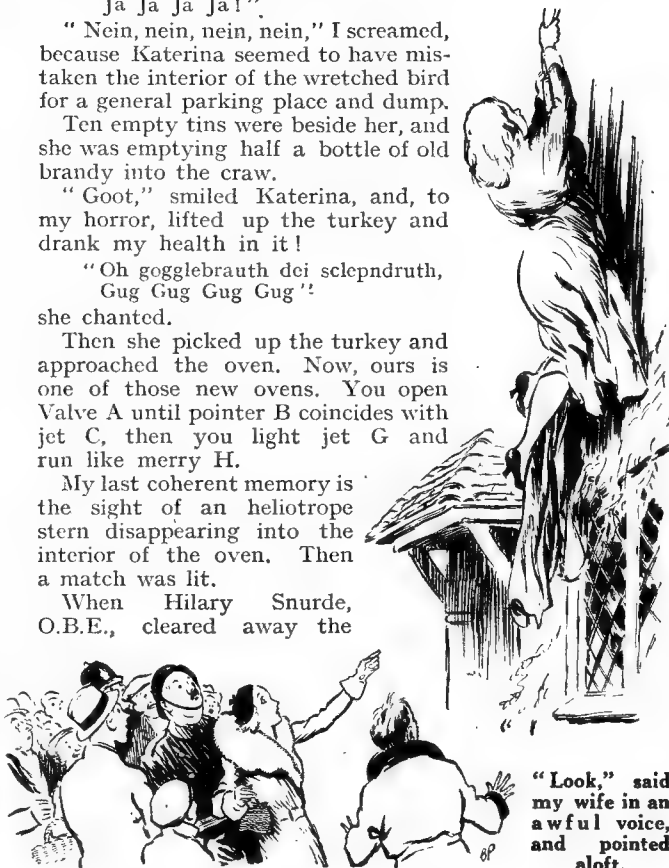
A POPULAR East-end referee was M.C. at a charitable boxing display, and appeared for the first time in evening clothes.

When the first bout was due to start, he jumped into the ring and turned slowly with outstretched arms to demand silence. As a deep hush settled over the audience, a Cockney cried out: "It fits all right, Mike. What abaht buying it?"

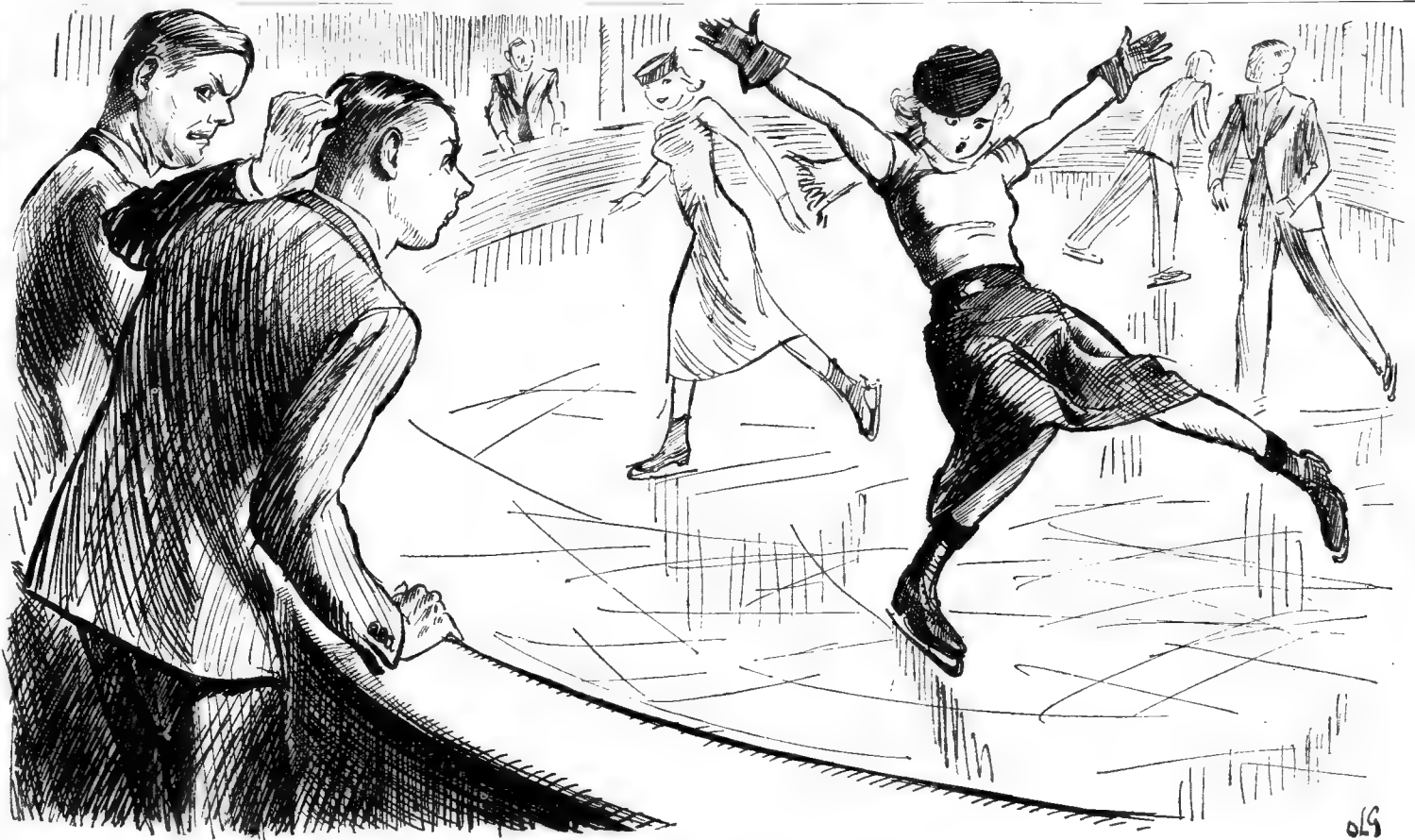
THE golf club secretary had just informed the member that he had won the monthly medal. The member looked pleased and then frowned.

"Any complaints?" asked the secretary.

"Not exactly; what's worrying me is a question of precedence. Do I wear it before or after my dog and poultry decorations?"



"Look," said my wife in an awful voice, and pointed aloft.



"By Jove, there's Grace, old man."
 "Do you really think so?"
 "My sister Grace, you ass."



"I think Pa's the outside limit. He's taken Bobby's toy train and, would you believe it, he's playing with it right under the mistletoe."

THE AUTHOR OF "YES, MADAM?"

Talks About Hats

By K.R.G. BROWNE

MR. GEORGE SHERIDAN and Miss Felicity Kent, meeting at the doorway of Mulberry Mansions, S.W.3, paused to exchange the unromantic greetings of their kind.

"Hullo, George," said Miss Kent, casually. "How goes?"

"Lo, Flick," said Mr. Sheridan, rather less casually. "I was coming to see you."

"In that case," said Miss Kent, hospitably, "come right up and have a quick one. Fair freezing, I be."

As she led the way through the swing-doors that shield the entrance-hall of Mulberry Mansions from the gaze of the passing mob, there issued from a little glass hutch beside the threshold a stout, pear-shaped figure in a green baize apron. The figure of Mr. Henry Duckett, ex-sergeant of Marines, hall-porter, general factotum, and minder of everybody's business save his own.

"Evening, miss," said Mr. Duckett, with a friendly flourish of his feather duster. "Evening, sir. Seasonable weather, ain't it? Cold, but Christmassy, as you might say."

"Cold?" said Miss Kent, vigorously stamping her feet. "Why, I'm turning blue round the edges. How's your daughter, Duckett?"

"Elsie, miss? Ah—that was a false alarm, that was. Kind of an indigestion-like, the doctor says—and me thinking it was the small-pox, or something of that, what with the spots and all! Quite herself again, young Elsie is, and thank you for asking. 'Fraid I'll have to trouble you to walk up, miss. Lift's conked out temp'ry."

"Again?" said Miss Kent, raising a well-tended eyebrow.

"That's right, miss. Conked out 's afternoon with Mr. Pepper in it—him from No. 10. Took me the best part of twenty minutes to get him out. Carried on something shocking, Mr. Pepper did. Missed a train, or something of that."

"If I were you, Duckett," said Miss Kent, seriously, "I'd tear that lift out by the roots and give it to the poor. Then you could haul us up and down in a basket. Come on, George—Excelsior!" And as they embarked on the laborious ascent: "Now there," she added, confidentially, "is the wife for you, George."

"Eh? Where?" said Mr. Sheridan, startled.

"Elsie Duckett. One of our dizziest blondes. And she boils a beautiful egg, they tell me. I give her bits of my discarded raiment sometimes, and she looks a lot snappier in it than I ever did."

"Rot!" said George, with conviction. "And talking of wives—"

"But we're not," said Felicity, amiably. "Not now, I mean. . . . Going home for Christmas, George?"

"Yup," replied Mr. Sheridan, briefly. "Family prayers and no brandy on the pudding. You going to the Latimers?"

Felicity nodded. "I'm due there to-morrow. Boiled shirts and ye olde Yule log."

"Like me to drive you down?" asked Mr. Sheridan, diffidently. "I mean, it's on my way, and I might as well go to-morrow as Saturday."

"That's very noble of you, George. It's not a bad idea. You know," said Felicity, pensively, "I think I'm going to have rather an exciting Christmas, one way and another. Aunt Helen's



"You don't go out in that, my girl," said Mr. Duckett. "Not while you're my daughter, you don't!"

hoping the mistletoe'll go to my head and get me affianced to Tony Latimer."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Sheridan, loudly.

"Here, I say Flick—"

"Hooray!" said Felicity. "Here we are at the summit. Now, where's my key? Go in and stand yourself a sherry, George, while I do my face. The aunt's out bun-fighting somewhere."

Obediently George parked his hat on the hall table and entered the drawing-room, tripping over the mat, as was his habit. He did not, however, stand himself a sherry, but relapsed into the largest available chair and sat frowning thoughtfully at the ceiling. A big young man was Mr. Sheridan, massively designed and almost as wide as he was long. A slow-moving, slow-thinking young man with awe-inspiring hands and feet; the kind of young man who is at his best on football fields and at his worst in drawing-rooms. Not a strikingly intellectual young man, but none the worse for that.

The door opened again and Felicity came into the room; she wore a pleased smile and carried a square cardboard box. "George," she informed him, "you're in luck. You shall be the first person to clap an eye on my new hat. Don't you have fun?"

Extracting a small, shapeless object from the box, she turned to contemplate her reflection in the mirror. The said reflection was well worth contemplating. Miss Kent's eyes, hair, nose and figure were respectively grey, auburn, *retroussé* and svelte; her smile would have charmed a misogynistic basilisk, while her laugh had been compared by impressionable gentlemen to (a) a peal of silver bells, and (b) a purring brook. In short, a comely piece.

Setting the hat carefully upon her head, she stood back to study the effect. "Like it, George?" she asked.

Mr. Sheridan was silent. To his untutored eye the alleged hat appeared as an amorphous fragment of green felt, adorned by a comic sort of bow arrangement. It sat upon Miss Kent's shapely head at so extreme an angle as to be almost invisible to anybody standing at her other side, being held in place presumably by will-power or suction. Had he first beheld it anywhere but upon Felicity's head, George would never have identified it as a hat.

"Well?" said Felicity, expectantly.

"Well," said George, cautiously, "it—it keeps your left ear warm, anyway."

"But do you like it?"

George coughed and shuffled his feet. "It's all right," he said.

"Don't quibble, George! Do you like it or don't you?"

Mr. Sheridan gulped and averted his gaze from the horror. "Well," he said, uneasily, and fell silent.

"Out with it, George! Good heavens!" said Felicity, scathingly. "I believe you're afraid to say what you think!"

"Afraid?" said George, stung. "I'm not afraid! I think—"

"Yes?" Mr. Sheridan began to perspire lightly at the temples, for he was a simple-minded and forthright young man, incapable of dissimulation. Though he would gladly have died for his lady, he could not lie to her. He ran a finger round his collar and achieved an unconvincing grin.

"I'm no judge of hats, Flick," he protested, feebly.

Felicity snorted in an expressive but ladylike manner.

"What a worm you are, George! If there's one thing I hate, it's a person who's afraid to say what he really thinks! Just because—"

"All right!" said George, suddenly, for a man can stand only so much. "If you really want to know what I think—"

"Well?"

"I think it's awful."

There was a little pause. "I see," said Felicity. "Thank you, George."

"Well, you asked me," said George, defensively, for he was already regretting his folly.

"Oh, yes," agreed Miss Kent, as from a considerable distance. "And you think I look awful in it?"

"I didn't say that!" cried George, alarmed. "I said the hat—"

"I heard you," said Felicity. She stared broodingly at her reflection, which stared broodingly back at her; as well it might, for the hat was unquestionably an awful hat. It was a hurriedly-selected hat, and hats that are chosen in haste are apt to be repented at leisure.

Felicity, indeed, had begun to repent it some little time ago, and she was naturally displeased to find that Mr. Sheridan shared her opinion.

Women, having no sense of justice, are funny that way. Even so, if George had had the wit to change the subject at this point, all might have been well; but he was young, and his anxiety to justify himself was his undoing. So wags the world away.

"Dash it all, Flick, you asked me—"

"Of course," said Felicity, broodingly.

(Turn to the Facing Page)

(Continued from the Facing Page)

"Well, then, why get peeved—?"

"Who's peeved?" demanded Miss Kent, quick as a flash.

"You are," persisted George, the oaf. "You're peeved because I said that hat was awful."

"My dear, good George," retorted Miss Kent, now very remote and queenly, "you flatter yourself! What makes you think I care two hoots about what you think about my hats?"

Another pause, devoted by Mr. Sheridan to the unravelling of this not-too-lucid query. That done: "If you ask me, Flick," he said, unasked, "you *know* it's a ghastly hat, and you wanted me to say it isn't."

At this shrewd stroke—for even the George Sheridans of this world are subject to such occasional inspirations—Felicity started and drew herself up to her full but inconsiderable height.

"Really, George," she observed, icily, "aren't you being rather uncouth? I mean, there's no need to be offensive!"

A flush of pardonable indignation stained Mr. Sheridan's manly cheek. That he should be thus reviled for offering an honest, if reluctant, opinion seemed to him grossly unfair. Felicity, he reflected, was behaving like a boxing-instructor, who, having laughingly invited a pupil to sock him on the jaw, is both surprised and annoyed when his invitation is accepted. Incensed by the injustice, he blundered on:—

"Dash it all, Flick," he said, testily, "don't be an idiot! You know perfectly well it's a ghastly hat, and if you had any sense—" Meeting Miss Kent's eye, he stopped abruptly; but he had said enough.

"Well, well!" said Felicity, in a voice that seemed to come straight from the Arctic Circle. She was no ill-tempered harridan, but Hell knows no fury like a woman whose new hat has been tried on and found wanting. At such moments wise men get out from under; but George, as has been shown, was not overburdened with wisdom. "So I'm a senseless idiot, too? A senseless, awful-looking idiot in a ghastly hat. Well," said Felicity, brightly, "one lives and learns! But—"

At this critical juncture occurred an interruption. The door opened, admitting a middle-aged lady of highly impressive physique, modishly upholstered and exuding authority at every pore. As this newcomer sailed rather than walked into the room, much as an Atlantic liner might enter an unimportant harbour, her proud blue eye alighted on and transfixed Mr. Sheridan, so that he arose from his chair as if worked by a spring.

"Oh—good evening, Mrs. Wedderburn," he said, nervously.

"Felicity," said Mrs. Wedderburn, ignoring this overture. "I hope you have finished your packing. We shall have no time to spare to-morrow."

"Be of good cheer, Aunt Helen," answered Felicity, docilely. "Everything's in but my toothbrush. To pack that will be the work of a moment."

"Ah," said Mrs. Wedderburn. "Well, George, I suppose you will be spending Christmas with your parents?"

"Er—yes," said George, with what was meant to be an ingratiating smile. "Yes. To-morrow. I mean, I'm going home to-morrow. I—er—I dropped in to ask Felicity if I can give her a lift to the Latimers' place. It's on my way, I mean."

Mrs. Wedderburn frowned slightly. In her capacity as guardian of her orphaned niece, she disapproved of Mr. Sheridan, as she disapproved of all males earning less than two thousand a year. A young man who toiled obscurely on the Stock Exchange, whose trousers perpetually bagged at the knees, whose lightest movement was fraught with peril to the drawing-room furniture, and whose idea of wholesome fun was to pursue a football on a muddy field—such a young man was not, in Mrs. Wedderburn's opinion, a fit playmate for Felicity. Mrs. Wedderburn, an ambitious woman, had certain definite plans for Felicity—plans in which Mr. Sheridan figured not at all. And so:—

"Thank you, George," said Mrs. Wedderburn,



"It's pretty certain I must get a shave somewhere before I dare go home."

with an indulgent smile. "But I am afraid that is out of the question. Felicity is travelling by train, with Lady Latimer and Tony."

"Oh, am I?" said Felicity, manifestly surprised.

"Yes. I have just had tea with Lady Latimer at her club. They will meet you at the station at ten-fifteen to-morrow."

Miss Kent's well-tended eyebrows rose and fell again; but she said nothing. Mr. Sheridan, rendered overbold by disappointment, chose to rush in where angels might well have feared to tread.

"Yes, but look here, Flick, you said—"

"Besides," added Mrs. Wedderburn, reprovingly, "a long journey in a small open car is not very enjoyable in this weather. I am sure Felicity would prefer to go by train. Wouldn't you, my dear?"

There was a short silence. Felicity's clear grey eye dwelt briefly on Mr. Sheridan's faintly anxious countenance, and travelled thence to

the green felt hat, lying limply on the table. At length: "Well, naturally," she said, in a perfectly expressionless voice. "Only a senseless idiot would want to go by car in this weather."

Mr. Sheridan started; his complexion deepened to a rich maroon and a large vein sprang into view on his forehead. He opened his mouth, closed it, opened it again and said, rather hoarsely: "I see. All right. Well—so long." The bric-à-brac on the piano quivered as he swung on his heel and strode towards the door. A moment later he was gone; a small china ornament on the mantelshelf rocked perilously as the door closed behind him with an emphatic thud.

"THE cab," said Mrs. Wedderburn, eyeing herself complacently in the hall mirror, "will be here very soon. Now I must run down and say good-bye to Mrs. Sidebotham-Smyth. She leaves for Madeira this morning."

(Turn Overleaf)



"You're very late home from the office, Dad. Fancy keeping me waiting all this time for your hat and pipe!"

K. R. G. BROWNE

"That's a bit of luck for Madeira," said Felicity, absently.

"I will send Duckett up for your luggage," said Mrs. Wedderburn, departing, "and meet you downstairs in ten minutes."

Left alone, Felicity—becomingly hatted and gowned for the journey—lingered for a little in the hall, staring reflectively at nothing in particular. Presently she sighed, ever so faintly, and turned to re-enter the drawing-room, only to pause and turn back as the front door-bell broke into an imperious clamour. As she opened the door:—

"Lo, Flick," said Mr. Sheridan.

Miss Kent was palpably taken aback; she stared dumbly at the large apparition on the doorstep.

"I've come for your luggage, *vice* Duckett," explained her visitor. "This your gear?" He walked briskly into the hall, gathered up a suit-case in each vast hand, and walked briskly out again. Miss Kent, recovered from her surprise, frowned slightly and said in a distant sort of voice:—

(Continued from the Preceding Page) "Really, George, you needn't bother. That's what Duckett's for. Besides—"

"This thing's working again, I see," said Mr. Sheridan. He pulled open the gate of the lift and stood waiting. Felicity hesitated, biting her lip; then she shrugged her shoulders, closed the door of the flat and stepped into the lift, somewhat in the manner of a duchess entering a swineherd's hovel. Her escort pressed the appropriate button and the little iron cage began its dignified descent.

"Nice day for a train-ride," remarked George, conversationally. "Sure you've packed everything, Flick? Toothbrush? Sponge? Bedsocks? Eyebrow-tweezers?"

This pleasantry evoked no response from Miss Kent, though she glanced at him in a faintly puzzled way. "I'm on my way home, you see," continued Mr. Sheridan, "and I thought I'd just look in and—Hullo!"

With a shuddering jerk the lift came suddenly to rest, midway between two floors. Casually George pressed the button, but with no result. Again and yet again he rammed the button home, until the lift shook beneath the pressure of his

massive thumb; but it remained as stationary as a man sunk to his ears in a bog.

"H'm!" said George, baffled. He looked at Felicity, who looked blankly back at him and said, as one stating a fact rather than asking a question: "Conked out again."

"You've said it," agreed George. "And now what?"

"Shout for Duckett." Promptly Mr. Sheridan drew a deep breath and gave tongue. Miss Kent shrank away, half-deafened by the din; the lift-ropes vibrated like so many harp-strings; the echo went booming up the shaft to die in the dim recesses of the roof. By comparison the ensuing silence seemed almost audible; then a faint answering hail drifted up to them, and the sound of hurrying feet. Anon the moon-shaped face of Mr. Duckett, purplish with exertion, hove into view at the turn of the stairs.

"Jew call, sir?" said Mr. Duckett, wheezing slightly. "Coo, I thought it was a fire, or—Lor'!" said Mr. Duckett, staring. "Don't tell me she's conked out again!"

"Well," returned George, as one anxious to be fair, "she won't budge, anyway. Up or down."

"There, now!" said Mr. Duckett, stooping and peering. The lift had stopped in such a position that the heads of its occupants were on a level with one landing, while their nether limbs were visible to anybody on the corresponding landing below. Like Mahomet's coffin, they hung suspended between earth and sky. "Try pushing the knob, sir."

"I've done that," answered George. "In fact, I've pushed the dashed thing so far in it won't come out again. Think of something else."

Mr. Duckett, who was not ideally shaped for prolonged stooping, assumed a kneeling posture on the landing. In this devout attitude he cogitated for a space, stimulating thought by scratching his left ear.

"Jump about a bit, sir," he suggested, hopefully. "That might shake her free-like."

"No, thank you," said Felicity, firmly. "He'd go clean through the floor, and I've come out without my parachute. You stay put, George. . . . But I *must* get out, Duckett. I've got a train to catch."

Mr. Duckett sat back on his heels and scratched his other ear. "Well, miss, I'll nip down to the basement and see what I can do. I can't promise nothing quick, though, miss. Best part of twenty minutes it took me to get Mr. Pepper out yes'day. Hall-porter, I'm supposed to be," said Mr. Duckett, aggrievedly. "Not a blooming engin—"

"Shush!" said George. "Here's your aunt, Flick."

There indeed was Mrs. Wedderburn, rising majestically into view as she mounted the stairs. Her face, seen thus at floor-level, seemed twice as large as life; her façade, as inch by inch it rose above the topmost stair, quite four times as impressive.

"Felicity!" she said, peremptorily. "The taxi is here. We must hurry."

"I'd love to, Aunt Helen," replied her niece, with a wistful little smile. "But I can't. I'm stuck."

"Stuck?" said Mrs. Wedderburn.

"What do you—Duckett!" Mr. Duckett rose from his knees with the alacrity of one stung by a hornet. "Do you mean to say this idiotic lift has gone wrong again?"

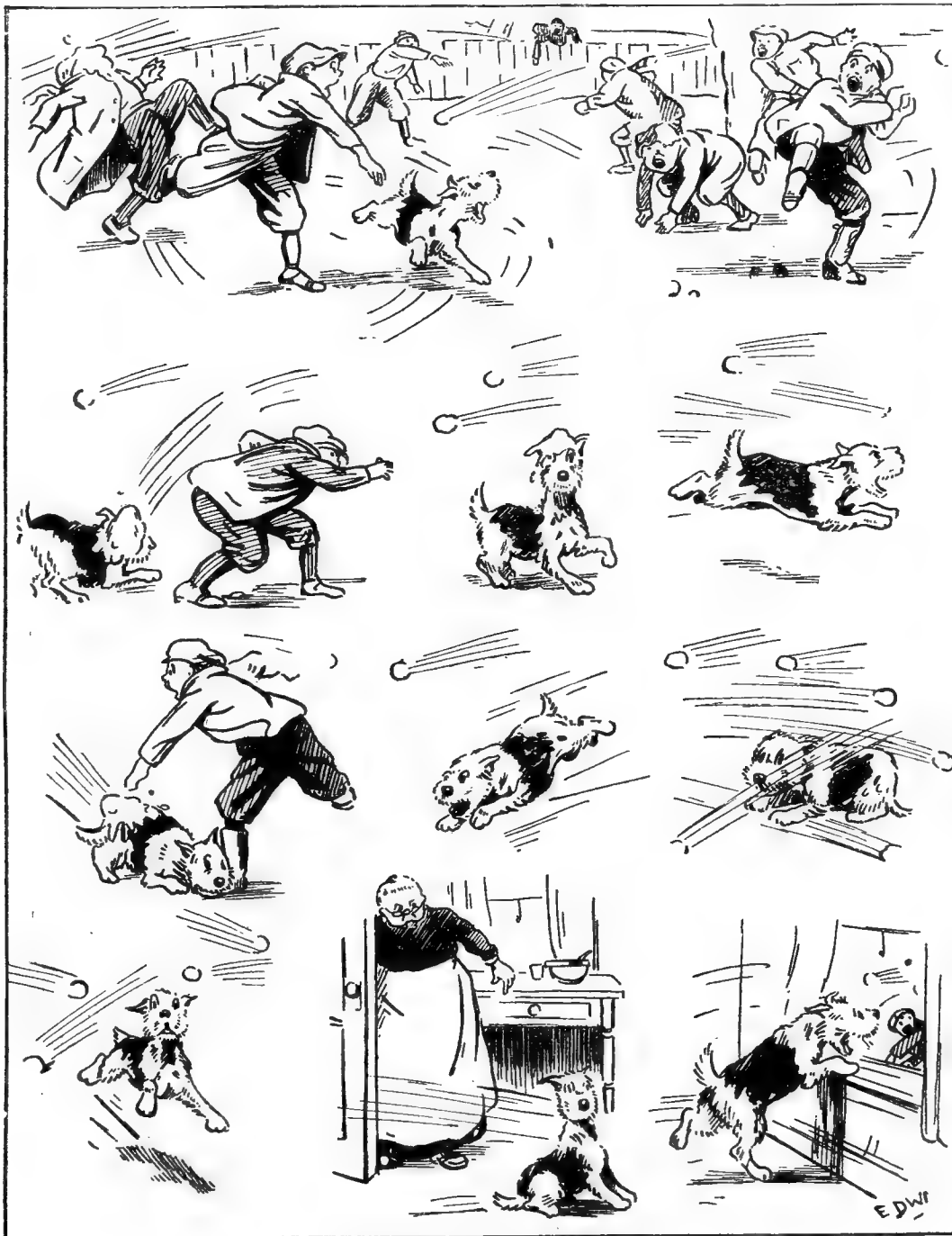
Mr. Duckett, of whom only his trousers and a pair of gay magenta carpet-slippers were now visible to the imprisoned pair, was understood to mumble a shy affirmative.

"Disgraceful!" snapped Mrs. Wedderburn. "Go and put it right at once! At once! Miss Kent has to catch a train."

"Well, I'll do my best, 'm," said Mr. Duckett, cautiously, "but I can't promise nothing quick, see? Best part of twenty minutes it took me yes'day—"

"Twenty minutes? Don't be absurd!"

(Turn to Page 20)



A FIGHT TO THE FINISH!

My eerie adventure THE GAMBLING GHOST

By GEORGE ROBEY

I HAVE not had much experience with ghosts, but there is one most remarkable episode I shall not easily forget.

I had gone to spend Christmas in the country, and was staying at a very old house which a friend of mine had owned for many years. We had a right royal time on Christmas Day, feasting, drinking, and generally making merry. Drowsy with food and good wine, at half-past two we were all sprawling round the great open hearth telling ghost stories. Naturally, the one connected with this particular house was given precedence. The youngest daughter of the house, a charming brunette, told the tale. . . .

It appeared that some generations ago the whole place, with its surrounding land, had been inherited by two brothers, who simply could not get on together. Little frictions occurred hourly, and not a day passed without they quarrelled fiercely. Gradually, the hard truth forced itself on them that if they continued living together much longer, something terrible might happen. There had been an occasion when John had gripped a carving-knife and attacked Richard murderously.

ONE Christmas Eve found them both half drunk and quarrelling viciously. It was then Richard suggested, half jokingly, that they should toss a coin to decide which of them should remain in possession of the farm, and which go abroad. John examined the suggestion carefully. They went into details. And finally they tossed. John won.

Twenty years later the ghost of Richard, the son who had lost, began to haunt the house. Villagers and servants about the place were reported to have seen the apparition on two occasions recently, and both times the ghost had been juggling with pennies, as if gambling. Apparently, it frequented a very old outhouse nearby. . . .

At this juncture in her story the daughter of the house was interrupted by her elder sister, who very determinedly announced that she had never seen the wretched ghost, anyway. The rest of the family laughingly agreed. No one, apart from a very impressionable maidservant and some gossiping villagers, had actually seen the ghost, and it was quite evident that they pooh-poohed the whole story. Anyway, it quickly faded from our conversation.

I felt gloriously drowsy that night and fell asleep almost immediately my head touched the pillow.

It must have been nearly four in the morning when I suddenly started up in bed. And, immediately, I knew that I had not awakened normally. Now, I don't consider myself easily moved by so-called supernatural happenings, but just for a minute a chilling shiver ran down my spine, and I felt strangely uneasy. Still sitting there I peered round the room. Not a movement; not a sound. Reassured, I

slipped from the bed and made towards the window.

It was snowing. Softly, sadly, the flakes fell, as though so weary of falling. Already the ground was covered and the trees and bushes heavily laden. I stood there for a moment fascinated by the leisurely beauty of that falling snow. And then suddenly I stiffened.

Out there by the old outhouse something had started up from the snow. It was as though a wave of white came up suddenly. Was I dreaming or was it moving forward? I pressed my face to the window-pane. Heavens, yes! It was moving—it had gone into the outhouse! I thought quickly. If I awakened the others they probably wouldn't believe me, and in any case would go noisily to investigate and spoil everything. Supposing I slipped down alone—

I put on a dressing-gown and crept into the passage. Perhaps, after all, it was only a trick of the snow on the bushes—moved by the wind, maybe. . . .

I APPROACHED the outhouse cautiously. Now I was at the door. I slid my head round and suddenly closed my teeth with a snap. In the instant that my head first appeared round the corner, I had the feeling that something had vanished from beside an old cartwheel lying inside. I waited a few seconds and then called, "Who's there? Who's there?" My voice echoed faintly. Then silence. With just the stealthy whisperings of the falling snow.

I struck a match. An oil lamp stood on a nearby trestle. I lit it and began exploring. There was no sign of life. I spent a long time examining the old cartwheel where I thought that something or someone had been. It was a very old wheel with a pile of broken timber behind it.

Exerting all my strength I managed to move the wheel and began poking about among the timber. Something gleamed dully in the light from my lamp. I strained my hand to it and brought it out. A very old, dusty penny, with a mildewed effigy of Queen Victoria. I turned it over. On the other side was another head of Queen Victoria exactly the same as the first. A double-headed penny!

I sat on the trestle to think. I was faintly excited. The two brothers, according to the ghost story, had tossed with a coin to decide who should remain in possession of the farm. Supposing John had deliberately used this double-headed penny and won by unfair means. . . .

Then was it Richard's ghost I had seen



Something gleamed dully in the light from my lamp.

coming to the outhouse in search of this penny? . . . Or had it been merely a trick of the snow on the bushes, and was my finding the penny at the same time merely a coincidence? Again, had the penny any connection whatever with the two brothers? . . .

I returned to my room, put the penny on my dressing-table, and climbed back to bed. To-morrow I would tell them what had happened, and produce the penny to prove what I said.

IT must have been half-past six when I awakened again. Once more I felt it was not quite a normal awakening. I had heard something. A cry—no—a series of sounds—and yet—Oh! hang it, I was tired. I turned over and slept. Almost the first thing I noticed when I awoke again was that the penny no longer lay on the dressing-table. I searched everywhere. Indirectly, I questioned everyone in the house without telling them what had happened. But the penny was not forthcoming. It had vanished completely, and I never found it again.

Now, if I had much faith in spooks, I would say that Richard's ghost came to my room and took that penny. But, somehow, that seems a tall order. In fact, the whole story from beginning to end, now I come to look back upon it, seems very fantastic.

In all probability I had eaten too much, and the wind moving the snow on the bushes close to the door of the outhouse had made it appear as though some white figure were entering the doorway.

However, I have merely set down here exactly what happened on that queer Christmas, and will leave it without further comment.



K. R. G. BROWNE (Continued from Page 18)

said Mrs. Wedderburn, acidly. "Miss Kent is due at Waterloo at ten-fifteen, and it is ten to ten now. Why don't you force the gate open?"

"Ah, that I can't do, 'm," explained Mr. Duckett, tolerantly.

"Not when she's stuck between two floors, like. That gate'll only open when she's stopped proper. 'Sautomatic, see? Well," said Mr. Duckett, as one embarking on a forlorn hope at grave personal risk, "I'll nip downstairs and see what I can do, 'm. But I can't promise nothing quick, mind."

Exit Mr. Duckett, humming a merry air. Mrs. Wedderburn approaching the lift, bent in a stately way to regard the inmates. Remarking Mr. Sheridan, she registered surprise and disapproval with her eyebrows.

"What," she inquired, coldly, "are you doing there, George?"

"Oh, I—er—I happened to be passing," answered that gentleman, bashfully. "On my way home, you know. So I thought I'd just pop in for a moment—compliments of the season, and so forth. Then I heard you telling Duckett to fetch Flick's luggage, and I thought I'd make myself useful. And so—well," said Mr. Sheridan, coughing, "here we are."

"Sorry, Aunt Helen," put in Felicity, "but it can't be helped. No good crying over stuck lifts, is it?"

"You should have had more sense than to use the lift at all!" said Mrs. Wedderburn, fretfully. "You might have known—" She broke off, glanced at her watch and uttered a clucking sound, expressive of exasperation. "Five to ten! Really, this is most annoying! Lady Latimer will be waiting at the station now. If you miss the train—"

"Let's face it, Aunt Helen," said Felicity, placidly. "I probably *shall* miss the train. In fact, I'd bet on it, knowing Duckett."

Mrs. Wedderburn, now quite mauve in the face—for her stooping days were over—straightened her aching back and clucked anew.

"Tst! Tst! Lady Latimer will be wondering—it will look extremely discourteous . . . if she waits for you, and misses the train herself. Really, this is most irritating!"

But here Mr. Sheridan lifted up his voice, saying humbly: "Look here, Mrs. Wedderburn—why not dash along to Waterloo now, and tell Lady Latimer the whole gripping story? Then she'll understand and forgive. And when we get out of here I'll bring Flick along and bung her on the next train, if any. I've got my car outside."

This eminently sensible suggestion was not received with shouts of joy from Mrs. Wedderburn. "Well—" she said uncertainly.

"It's ten o'clock," George notified her. "You'll just do it."

Mrs. Wedderburn, that harassed soul, clucked a little more and took a hurried turn about the landing, wrestling with her problem. Somewhere close at hand a clock began to strike the hour, and she came abruptly to a decision.

"Very well, Felicity," she said, irritably. "I will go to Waterloo and explain to Lady Latimer. Then I will inquire about the next train and wait for you at the booking office. George, you will drive very carefully, please. That car of yours looks exceedingly unsafe to me."

With no further word of farewell, she turned and went with dignified haste down the stairs and from their sight. She left behind her a

short silence, which was broken by the voice of Mr. Sheridan saying: "Well, well, well!"

No reply from Miss Kent.

"I hope," said George, thoughtfully, "old Duckett'll get us out of here before Christmas. I believe it's fearfully unlucky to eat turkey in a lift."

Felicity continued to hold her peace.

"You're not wearing that green hat, I see," remarked George, casually. "Chucked it away, or something?"

Felicity started slightly. "My dear George," she said in a tone compounded equally of vinegar and honey, "do you *really* think I'd chuck a hat away because you didn't approve of it? That hat," explained Felicity, with a patient smile, "is a *town* hat, George. Not a country hat at all."

"Is that so?" said George. "Well, I'll take your word for it. Anyway, I'm sorry I got so wrought up about it, Flick. Dashed rude of me. That's why I blew in this morning, really. I wanted to ap—Hullo! We're off."

Such was indeed the case. With no warning save a jerk and a gentle shudder, the lift resumed its interrupted journey. Moving with a deliberation that, in the circumstances, amounted almost to an insult, it sank solemnly earthward, arrived in due course at the ground floor, and was again at rest. With a sigh of relief, Mr. Sheridan flung back the gate and bowed his fellow-captive out.

"By Jove!" he said, looking about. "The old place hasn't changed a bit! Even Duckett doesn't look a day older. . . . What's eating him, I wonder?"

Mr. Duckett, his back towards them, was standing by his little hutch, delivering a loud and apparently acrimonious address to a member of the opposite sex. The latter—a slightly improbable blonde of comparatively tender years, caparisoned about twelve months in advance of the current feminine mode—was clearly growing restive under the lash of his tongue; with resentment in every line of her fashionably emaciated figure, she was kicking sulkily at the carpet and from time to time muttering under her breath.

" . . . and that's my last word, see?" said Mr. Duckett, trenchantly. "So you can put that in your pipe and smoke it! You don't go out in that, my girl—not while you're my daughter, you don't! It's bad enough," said Mr. Duckett, bitterly, "to have you the talk of the street, what with coming in at all hours and going about dolled-up like a—like a blooming trapeze-dancer. But when it comes to making a laughing-butt of yourself, young Elsie—"

"Sssssh!" said young Elsie, suddenly.

"Hey?" said Mr. Duckett, thrown out of his stride. "Don't you sssssh *me*, my girl! I—Oh!" He paused, cleared his throat loudly, and continued in a milder tone: "Beg pardon, miss—didn't see you was there. 'Fraid you've missed your train, after all. I done my best, but I couldn't do it no quicker."

"Nobody could have done it quicker," Mr. Sheridan assured him kindly. "And what's a train between friends? Waterloo's crawling with 'em."

"In that case," said Felicity, moving towards the door, "we'd better hurry, or Aunt Helen—"

"Excuse me, miss," said Mr. Duckett, respectfully. "Could you spare a minute to speak to young Elsie here?"

"Me?" said Felicity, staring. "What about?"

"That there hat she's got on," said Mr. Duckett, scowling balefully at his offspring. "Looks ridic'ulous, don't it? Making herself a laughing-butt, that's what she's doing. She won't listen to me, but if you was to—"

"Sssssh!" said Miss Duckett, urgently. "Give over, Dad, do!"

"You shut up," requested her parent, curtly. "Call that a hat? Why, I'd be ashamed to use that for a penwiper! Look at Miss Kent here—laughing all over her face at you! She *knows* about hats, Miss Kent does, see? I'm as partial to a bit of fun as any man," said Mr. Duckett, rather inconsequently, "but that

there hat's past a joke. 'S a nightmare, that's what —"

"Will you give *over*!" hissed Miss Duckett, in a penetrating whisper. "It was her gave it me!"

Mr. Duckett started violently. "Wossat?" he said, faintly.

There was a tense little pause. Then Felicity laughed and said: "Yes, I gave it to her. Last night, as a matter of fact."

"Lor!" muttered the stricken Mr. Duckett.

Felicity shot a swift glance at Mr. Sheridan, standing elaborately still and silent in the background. She drew a quick breath and went gamely on: "But your father's quite right, Elsie. It doesn't suit you—I can see that now. Green's not your colour, really. Tell you what—come up and see me after Christmas, and we'll dig you out another. How's that?"

"Thank you, miss," said Miss Duckett.

"Good!" said Felicity, brightly. "Don't forget. Well, we must shove along. Happy Christmas, both of you! Coming, George?"

To the accompaniment of vague but respectful mumbles from the Duckett family, she pushed open the swing-doors and walked sedately down the steps to where Mr. Sheridan's small, battered, and cherished car waited at the kerb. Mr. Sheridan followed her a moment later; but not until he had assisted her to her seat, enfolded her carefully in a rug, and established himself behind the steering-wheel did he see fit to speak. Then:—

"Talking of hats—" he said, and grinned. The grin became a chuckle, the chuckle a laugh, that echoed down the wintry street and made the welkin ring. For a while Miss Kent resisted the infection; then she, too, began to laugh and went on laughing until the tears stood in her eyes. When she could speak coherently again:—

"And it looked better on Elsie," she said, feebly, "than it did on me! You were absolutely right, George. I knew all the time it was a ghastly hat. And after we had that row about it I simply loathed the beastly thing. I'm a pig-headed idiot. Sorry."

"Granted as soon as asked," said George, still grinning. "I ought to have been more tactful about it, anyway. That's why I came round to-day. I didn't want—well, it seemed a pity—Christmas, and all that, I mean."

"I know," said Felicity, nodding. "That's why I was glad you came round to-day, though I wasn't going to say so. I—talking of Christmas, what about Waterloo? I mustn't miss the next train."

"But you have, old dear," said George, serenely. "There isn't a next train. The ten-fifteen's the only one that makes the connection—I looked it up."

"You looked it up?" said Felicity, sharply. "When, George? You couldn't—George!"

"Yeah?"

"The lift! It wasn't—you didn't—"

Mr. Sheridan's grin shone out again. He cocked an unrepentant eye at her and winked—a vast and vulgar wink, replete with meaning.

"There are more ways of killing a cat," he said, "than drowning it in old brown sherry. I bet that's the easiest quid old Duckett ever earned. You see, I wanted to drive you down to the Latimers."

"George!"

"I've left a message for Aunt Helen. She'll have started back by now."

"Poor Aunt Helen!" said Felicity, though not altogether as if she meant it. "But, George—why did you want to drive me down to the Latimers? Just for company?"

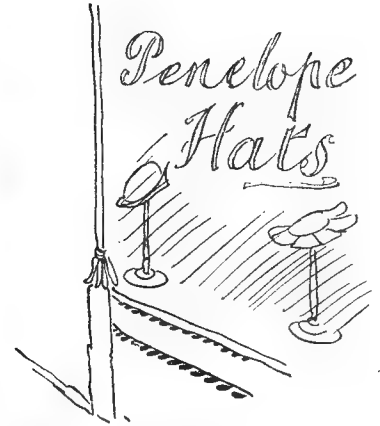
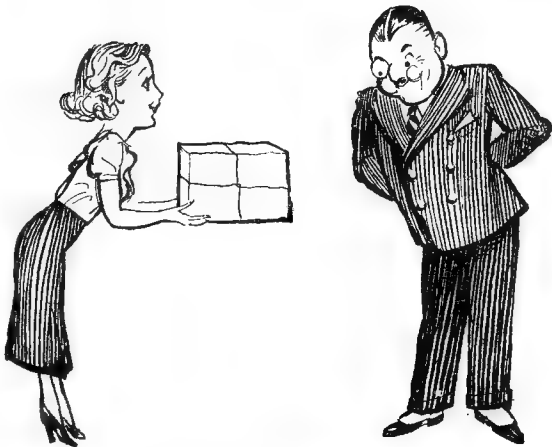
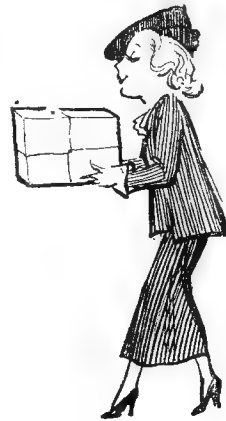
George turned in his seat and looked at her, and the grin was no longer in evidence. "Partly that," he said, "and partly because there's something I want to ask you before Christmas—what with Tony Latimer and one thing and another. I meant to ask you last night, but—so I had to arrange this."

"I see," said Felicity. "Well, ask away."

"What, here?" said Mr. Sheridan, indignantly. "Have a heart, Flick! I know a better place than this!"

Miss Kent smiled delightfully and drew the rug more closely about her.

"Then, what," she said very meekly, "are we waiting here for, George?"



"I chose it myself."

Christmas Comes to a MAMMOTH

By **HOTEL**
Claude F. Luke



3 A.M. The streets are strangely cold and empty. Shaftesbury

Avenue curves away into the darkness, as quiet as a suburban road. Regent Street looks eerily deserted. Even Piccadilly Circus seems a little tired of being the hub of the Empire. At this early hour it wears a stale, forlorn air, like a room the morning after a party. Here and there stray batches of revellers pile into taxis, shouting "Happy Christmas!" to a yawning policeman on the corner.

That reminds us. Christmas Day is already three hours old.

We shiver and turn gratefully towards the cheerful entrance of our ever-open hotel. The head night porter greets us. We don't envy him his job. For the past two hours and for the next five absolute authority over this mammoth hotel rests upon his shoulders. Seventeen hundred guests and about 230 members of the staff are sleeping in the 1,200 bedrooms above his head. They are safer than in their own homes. This man, and his thirty-four assistants, have the experience and equipment to cope with any emergency. The eccentric guest? Sudden illness? Sleep-walker? The visitor who wakes in the middle of the night and demands a steak? The head night porter is never at a loss—and never has been, although he has held this post every night since the hotel was opened, and has had three million visitors in his care during the past seven years.

To-night, curiously, is one of his slack nights. There are few late arrivals on Christmas Eve, and those that do show up will have to be turned away unless their room is already booked. "Bookings for Christmas start at the end of August and we are filled to capacity by Christmas," he says.

We wander away to the basement

where "Boots" and his nine assistants are hard at work. Brushing and polishing machines hum softly over a thousand pair of boots and shoes are rapidly brightening. "We make two collections," says "Boots"; "one at nine in the evening. That's for the early-to-bed visitors. We like to pick them up before the late parties break up, to remove temptation from the humorist who thinks it frightfully funny to change the shoes along a whole floor. Our final collection is at midnight and we work here throughout the night to have the boots and shoes delivered at 6.30 a.m."

Down here also is the night engineering staff. The mechanical heart of this sleeping monster needs constant attention. Heat and power must be kept up; lights must not fail. At this moment electric power is being drawn upon by the fourteen porters who are silently vacuum-cleaning every inch of the stairs, corridors, and lounges; by eight in the morning, when the cleaners go off duty, the hotel will be as spotless as a newlywed's drawing-room.

We walk upstairs and along the silent corridors for which the hotel recently purchased ten miles of Axminster and Wilton carpets. In those rows of rooms with their 1,100 fitted wardrobes, 1,500 Queen Anne beds (made in Glasgow), and their 25,000 moulded fittings are representatives of some forty nationalities and almost every British colony and Dominion. A league of nations under one roof! Many of them have been here every Christmas since the

hotel opened. Now they sleep, unconscious of the discreet activity that goes on throughout the night for their comfort and safety.

Not all of them sleep. Outside one door a light flickers. There are no disturbing bells. Warning lights are used instead. A night porter hurries to the door. He emerges with the ghost of a smile on his grave features. "Old gentleman wants a couple of bismuth tablets," he whispers; "always a call for them on Christmas Eve." He winks solemnly and hurries away. Later, it is a woman demanding a cup of tea—at four in the morning! Or a mother whose child is a bit feverish—for her the porter calls the resident matron, a qualified nurse.

Occasionally, as we walk through the silent corridors, we are challenged by the night patrols and firemen. That is their job. No sleeping royalty is better guarded than the guests behind these doors. And in this vital work the human element is ruled out. It is easier for a sentry to sleep at his post than for a hotel patrol to nod while on duty. The reason is that at various points on his rounds, and at certain times, he must ring through to a central office and report "All's well." If, at any point, he fails to ring, the central office immediately wants to know why.

6.30 A.M. The hotel staff stretches itself. Yawns. Jumps out of bed. The thirty-four night porters go off duty. One

or two stick sprigs of mistletoe in their hats. A housekeeper sweeps into view. Incidentally, there are sixteen housekeepers; most of them can speak two or three languages.

Now the hotel is properly awake, and for the next few hours the maids are going to be busy. Many of them are Scottish, and they have a room of their own where the talk is all of Scotland. They have even started a Caledonian Society!

Each girl has ten rooms and three bathrooms in her charge. Baths to be prepared, early-morning teas, break-



"Here! Stop! That's my father—I've got first shot at him!"

(Turn to Column Three, Page 24)

The Writer's World

No. 19

Christmas, 1934

For New Writers

The New Writer's Great Chance

A Second Income in Spare Time

By MICHAEL GORING

THE supply of suitable articles and short stories does not meet the demand; that is why many editors have to buy MSS. from America and why competitions are organised to attract fresh talent.

Newspapers rely to a large extent on outside—that is, free-lance—contributors for literary articles, and articles and stories for periodicals and magazines are supplied almost entirely by non-staff writers.

The craft of authorship, besides being the most fascinating occupation possible, ranks among the most profitable to-day. And it can be followed as a spare-time occupation—a hobby.

It is not the pastime for everyone, of course, for it necessitates the possession of literary ability. When a person has that ability then all that is needed is study in the technique of writing articles and stories. If you have that ability you are a potential author, and at the expense of a moderate fee—which can be paid in small instalments—and of three or four hours a week given to a fascinating study, you can master the art of article and story writing, and if you are quick, *sell your work while you are learning*.

Over 1,000 publications constantly require the work of free lances, and provided a person can learn to write interestingly and in the conventional form, he will have little difficulty in disposing of his MSS. As much as three guineas can be gained for an article of a

few hundred words, and up to twenty guineas for a 5,000-word story.

The writer is a person who lives the most varied and interesting life imaginable. He finds material for his work in everything.

The type of contribution in particular demand is that which deals with the problems, the humours and the humanness of everyday life; and that is why many of the printed contributions are the work, not of professional writers, but of people in offices, workshops, rectories, schools—and, not least, the home.

But a person who attempts, without training, to produce contributions for the Press is working in the dark. Editors will return his work with formal regrets which tell him nothing that will put him right. The subject matter of an article may be wrong; its form may be faulty or the plot of a story may lack the "twist" that will make all the difference to it—but the untrained writer, in all probability, will never know, and eventually he gives up in disgust, not realising that between him and success was but a brief training.

The Regent Institute offers you that training with the personal guarantee of the Director of Studies that you will be as carefully coached as though you were the Institute's only student. **If you are uncertain whether you possess sufficient literary aptitude to make success probable, submit a short MS. or a fairly lengthy letter, and you will be given a frank and an expert opinion.**

What to Write About

YOUR particular interest—not necessarily an expert one—may be, say, Science, Psychology, Nature, Business, Domesticity, Children. There is ample scope for endless articles upon any of those subjects, and once one has learnt how to dig up information, one need not confine oneself to a pet topic. To understand how easy it is to find article matter from the general subject, glance at the titles under the heading below:

SCIENCE.—Simple Weather Prophecy; Observatory Wonders; What to Do Till the Doctor Comes.

NATURE.—Nature's Mimicry; Hedgerow Medicines; How to Make a Bird-Bath.

BUSINESS.—Has the Business Woman "Made Good"?; The Secret of Success; The Best Hour of the Day.

DOMESTICITY.—That Spare

Room; Make Your Own Wine; Hot Weather Dishes.

CHILDREN.—The Boyish Girl; Are Prizes Wrong? The Best Games for Children.

You might not now be able to write on any of these subjects, but if you learn to express yourself in a journalistic style there is scarcely one you could not tackle. It is not a matter of particular knowledge but of knowing where to seek certain information and of having the confidence to treat a subject—a confidence born of ease of style and acquiring the rules of construction.

The Regent Institute is a school of journalism whose primary aim is to turn out writers who can sell their work, but it also welcomes those who desire to learn the craft of writing because of its cultural value or those who want a fascinating hobby. Send for the Institute's free booklet, "How to Succeed as a Writer." It will show you of what the literary Courses consist and how it is possible to make an absorbing hobby both cultural and remunerative.

"I Have Gone from Success to Success"

—a new writer

THE postbag of the Regent Institute—the well-known correspondence school which has now a record of fifteen years' uninterrupted success—was never more interesting than to-day. Letters are being received from students in all parts of the country who are earning substantial additions to income by writing articles and stories in their leisure hours. One pupil reports that his *spare-time earnings almost equalled his salary last year*. His letter speaks for itself:

Since finishing your Course I have stepped from success to greater success, until now I am turning out articles with such regularity that I am never idle. My published articles for last year alone numbered well over 200.

I am never at a loss for a subject, your valuable tuition having taught me how to "dig out" material, and what is more, how to treat it.

All along my earnings have been truly gratifying—far in excess, indeed, of my wildest dreams. In all sincerity I say that but for your excellent Course and constructive criticism I would most likely have still been groping in the dark and meeting the inevitable disappointments incidental to ignorance of the technique of writing for the Press. As it is, rejection slips are now almost a forgotten bogey.

This is only one out of thousands of success reports received from students—most of whom, by the way, had no previous experience of writing before they enrolled for a course of postal tuition. Following are extracts from a few recent letters:

"In the two years which have elapsed since I completed your Course in Journalism I have had, on an average, about one article a week accepted. . . . Considering how little time I can devote to writing, my progress—thanks to your Course—has surprised and pleased me."—J. N.

More and More Acceptances

"You will be pleased to hear that I am having more and more acceptances."—S. F. W.

Writing for Leading Magazines

"I went through your Courses, and with a result that I cannot speak too highly of. I have the entry to the best magazines of the day."—A. L.

Best Investment

"I have an absorbing spare-time hobby, and my tuition fee is the best paying investment I ever had."—R. H.

Writing Serials

"At present I am writing serials, which take up most of my time. . . . I also do quite a lot of 'long completes' for them" [a well-known firm of periodical publishers].—F. L.

Free Lessons for New Writers

An Interesting Offer to Readers

Post the Coupon To-day

Readers of TIT-BITS who have literary ambitions are advised to write to the Regent Institute for a specimen lesson of the fascinating and practical Course in Journalism and Short Story Writing conducted by that well-known correspondence school. Applications should be addressed to The Regent Institute (Dept. 38A), Regent House, Palace Gate, London, W.8.

THE records of the Regent Institute (which has a world-wide reputation for training free-lance journalists) contain scores of cases of *almost immediate success* won by students who had never written a line for publication before they enrolled.

Earning While Learning

One student earned over £100 while learning; another sold 90 articles and short stories; and many others have become regular contributors to the Press before reaching the end of the Course.

"The Regent Institute has an enviable record of unbroken success," wrote the editor of a well-known weekly. "Their pupils have met with amazing success," said another editor in advising new writers to seek the aid of the Institute.

By posting the coupon you will have the opportunity of reading the first lesson of a Course that has enabled hundreds of men and women to increase their income by writing in their leisure hours.

Send for FREE LESSON

and 24-Page Booklet

Post the following coupon in an unsealed envelope (½d. stamp), or write a simple request for the specimen lesson and the prospectus.

THE REGENT INSTITUTE

(Dept. 38A), Regent House, Palace Gate, London, W.8.

I shall be glad to receive the following on the distinct understanding that I am not committed to any expense or obligation whatever:

(a) A free specimen lesson of the Postal Course in Journalism and Short Story Writing.

(b) A free copy of your prospectus, "How to Succeed as a Writer," with full particulars of your postal tuition.

Name BLOCK LETTERS

Address



"If they had to decorate the bathroom why couldn't they use ivy!"

IS CHRISTMAS PLAYED OUT?

A FRENCH father recently brought an action against the tutor of his little son for telling him that Father Christmas was a myth. He asked for £800 damages, but got an apology and four pounds as compensation.

There is much to be said for the father's point of view, for though children are much more sophisticated to-day than formerly, it is they who keep the spirit of Christmas in being, and it is a pity to spoil that happy and innocent imaginative quality which gives so much zest to Christmas celebrations.

Some people hold that Christmas is played out, that with the definite passing of the old world and the coming of the mechanical age there is no longer room for its ancient beliefs and customs. Yet one has only to mingle with children to realize that Christmas is as much alive as ever.

It is certainly difficult to keep up the innocent myth of Santa Claus when children accompany their parents to the big stores and learn where their gifts come from, but so long as a show of belief secures the goods the youngsters care little who is responsible for the bulge in their Christmas stocking.

THE man who had thoroughly enjoyed himself during Christmas sat with his head between his hands.

"It can't be done," he moaned.

"What can't be done?" asked his wife.

"You can't have a merry Christmas and happy New Year."

"PLEASE, sir," said the office-boy, entering timidly, "I think somebody wants you on the telephone."

"What do you mean?" thundered the manager. "What's the use of saying you think I'm wanted? Am I wanted or not?"

"Well, sir, somebody rang up and said: 'Is that you, you idiot?'"

CUSTOMER: "What have you got in the shape of motor tyres?"

Assistant: "Children's hoops, lifebelts, quoits, curtain rings, invalid cushions, gramophone records, and bicycle wheels."

"What's the matter?" asked the passenger in the back seat of the ninth-hand car.

"Some sheep on the road," explained the driver.

Ten minutes later there was another hold-up.

"Dash it," cried the driver, "I've caught up with those sheep again."

MAMMOTH HOTEL

(Continued from Page 22)

fasts in bed, laundry lists—swiftly, silently they pass from room to room. No. 17 wants a bath at precisely 70 degrees. No. 21 wants tea and aspirin immediately. No. 22 wants a quiet half-hour with the menu; with him breakfast is a sacred rite, not to be rushed.

Down in the restaurant six hundred places are ready for breakfast. They were laid overnight with part of the 250,000 pieces of Minton china that comprises the hotel's colossal "china cabinet." In the kitchens the chef and his 154 cooks smoothly cope with the rising tide of orders from restaurant and bedrooms—mere child's play in comparison with the 1,500 Christmas dinners they will have to cook and serve later.

9 A.M.

Although still early for the visitor, the hotel's day is already well advanced. Many of the 230 members of the staff who sleep on the premises in their own quarters—early and late waitresses, chambermaids, cashiers, and others—have long been at work. The assistant day manager has been at his post an hour—the head porter having handed over his charge at 8 a.m. Upwards of fifty Christmas trees have appeared in all parts of the reception rooms, and one monster has been dressed and decorated by the housekeeping staff.

The telephone switchboard, with its eighteen miles of cable, 12,000 feet of steel conduit, and 99,000 soldered connections, is clicking and winking with life. The twenty telephonists are busy passing on calls for the 1,300 hotel telephones, chiefly Christmas greetings for the guests.

Gradually the bedrooms and reception rooms empty. Sightseers wander out to look upon a strange, deserted London. Many go off to St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey or for a walk in the Park, and return clamouring for the roast beef, turkey, plum pudding, and mince pies—the old English fare which is this hotel's special Christmas lunch.

The tempo of the hotel's life slackens off in the afternoon. The bulk of the staff meets for dinner, and there is dancing afterwards until it is time to prepare the gala dinner-dance; meanwhile, in the Winter Garden, families and friends hold large and cheerful tea parties. It is the children's hour—small boys, noise, and toys.

9.30 P.M.

Christmas night and gaiety everywhere. Dancing in the grill room. Upstairs, before retiring, chambermaids are preparing rooms for the night. "Boots" is making his first rounds. The restaurant is being laid for Boxing Day breakfast.

NEARLY MIDNIGHT.

We stop by the telephone exchange. The night telephonist, a man, receives a call. "Yes, Regent Palace Hotel, London, speaking. New York, you say? Hold on—I'll put you through." He turns and grins at us. "Young fellow in New York wants to wish his sweetheart a happy Christmas. Only just in time, too."

We glance at the clock. Cocktail time in New York; one more minute and it will be Boxing Day here. The million wheels of this vast hotel's machinery move smoothly forward to another day. . . .

FENN SHERIE on PANTO SONGS

YOU'LL SOON BE SINGING



June will be Cinderella in this year's pantomime at Drury Lane Theatre

ABOVE the roar of traffic in Charing Cross Road, Britain's Street of Song, you can hear the tinkling of a dozen pianos. The melody factories are at work, turning out tunes for the Christmas pantomimes.

Inside the palatial offices of the music moguls your favourite artists are trying over the latest "numbers," picking out what they believe will be the hits of the season. Let's peep inside and see what the stars foretell.

A quiet, pleasant young man is leaning across a piano while a dazzling blonde turns over a new batch of "professional copies." He is Mr. Eddie Day, of Francis, Day and Hunter, and she is a well-known Principal Boy. "Something breezy and not too sentimental," she suggests.

"Here's the very thing," says Mr. Day, and as the pianist strikes a chord, they begin to sing these lines:—

SING as we go, and let the world go by,
Singing a song we'll march along the high-way.

Say good-bye to sorrow, there's always to-morrow to think of to-day.

Sing as we go, although the skies are grey,
Beggars or kings you've got to sing a gay tune.
A song and a smile, making life worth while
So sing (ta-ra-ra-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta!)
—as we go along!

Just as the final chord is struck, a sad-faced man pops his head through the doorway. We recognize him as a famous comedian. "That's a cheery number," he says. "Wish you could find me one like it; something with a spot of comedy in it."

Mr. Day smiles like a conjurer about to produce a rabbit from a hat, dives into a drawer and produces a sheet of manuscript music. "Here's the latest thing by Weston and Lee, the composers of 'Goodbye,' 'Sister Susie,' and scores of other comedy hits," he says. "Just sending it down to the printers; but you can try it before it goes if you like."

STICK a geranium in your hat to show you're happy
And you mean to be a jolly soul;
Carry a daffodil in your hand and look real snappy
With a sunflower in your buttonhole!
Why care if everybody around you
Thinks that you're the King of the May
—HEY!
Stick a geranium in your hat to show you're happy
And to-day is your joy day.

While they are romping through that refrain, let us tear ourselves away and walk a few yards down the street to the offices of Cecil Lennox and Co. Here's a team of all-British song-writers at work. They have recently produced a love ballad with a really novel idea, and as we enter Tolchard Evans, the quiet young composer with the dreamy eyes, is playing over the melody, while Stanley Damerell, lean, talkative lyric writer, is singing the chorus. This is how it goes:—

I BOUGHT myself a bottle of ink,
I bought myself a pen,
And after that—well, what do you think?
I sat down there and then.
But when I tried to write what I'd been thinking all the day,
Heigh-ho! What am I going to say?
I'd bought myself a blotting pad in case I made a smudge;
Although my heart was beating fast, my hand refused to budge,
And then I said "By Jingo! Like the nib, I am a jay.
Heigh-ho! What am I going to say?"
Once again to write that letter I tried, but in vain,
Then just in a flash, it seemed, an inspiration came.
I grabbed hold of the bottle of ink, I grabbed hold of the pen,
And after that—well, what do you think?
I sat down there and then.
I wrote a life's ambition in a simple word or two,
Heigh-ho! "Darling, I do love you!"

"That's just what I want," says a voice from a deep armchair in the corner, and, turning, we recognize a famous pantomime producer.

A dozen pianos are tinkling in the offices of Mr. Lawrence Wright, the song-picker, better known to the public as Horatio Nicholls, composer of hundreds of big song hits. As we enter we find him seated alone at the piano.

"I'm just going to play my latest ballad over to a pantomime producer in Manchester," he says, in his slow North Country accent. Noticing our puzzled expression, he nods towards the telephone, which has been lifted from its hook

and lies just over the keyboard. And as he begins to play the lilting melody, he croons this chorus into the mouthpiece:—

WHAT shall I do when you're away?
What shall I do without you?
What shall I do from day to day?
Nothing but dream about you.
Why did you go and leave me lonely?
You must have known I'd be so lonely,
You know that you're my one and only;
If you don't come back, what shall I do?

A little farther down the street we enter the premises of Mr. Bert Feldman, the veteran publisher who brought ragtime to England. "The Guv'nor," as they call him, is too busy to see us, so we ask one of his right-hand men, Jimmy Kennedy, to pick a few winners for us.

"Nearly all the Principal Boys and Girls will be featuring this duet," he says as he sits down at the piano. "It's the ideal song for Cinderella and the Prince":—

WHEN this lovely dance is over, don't say Good night.
Let me live this moment over, don't say Good night.
Oh, please don't break the spell,
I have so much to tell you.
Can't I compel you
To see the light?
Now that we're here together
Just hold me tight.
Why can't this go on for ever?
Don't say Good night.

Jimmy Kennedy, handsome young Irish ex-schoolmaster, is good at boosting the songs of other composers, but he modestly omits to mention that he himself happens to be the most successful of British lyric writers at the moment. He wrote "Play To Me, Gipsy," the sales of which beat all records over the past five years. Now he has made another sensation with "Isle of Capri."

Jimmy Phillips, the astute managing director of the Peter Maurice Music Company, snapped it up, and it has already sold over 100,000 copies and nearly half a million gramophone records! Here are the words of the chorus:—

'TWAS on the Isle of Capri that I found her
Beneath the shade of an old walnut tree.

Oh, I can still see the flowers blooming round her

When we met on the Isle of Capri.
She was as sweet as a rose at the dawning,

But somehow Fate hadn't meant her for me,

And though I sailed with the tide in the morning,

Still my heart's on the Isle of Capri.
Summer time was nearly over,
Blue Italian sky above.

I said, "Lady, I'm a rover,
Can you spare a sweet word of love?"

She whispered, softly, "It's best not to linger,"
And then as I kissed her hand I could see
She wore a plain golden ring on her finger,
'Twas Good-bye on the Isle of Capri.



Miss Phyllis Neilson-Terry, Drury Lane's Prince Charm-ing

SO THAT'S HOW IT STARTED!

By W. J. Passingham

OUR "good old English Christmas" is, in fact, a very international affair, for few among its many familiar customs originated in Britain. Take, as a first example, the central figure about whom the whole festive season revolves—Santa Claus. His story, from our point of view, is a mass of inconsistencies. Santa Claus is a Dutch Americanism for Saint Nicholas, who was a native of Patara, in Lycia, Asia Minor, and his real festival does not fall on Christmas Day, but on December 6th.

The remarkable fact about Saint Nicholas is that he figures less in history and more in legend than probably any other notability. He is the patron saint of children because of his gifts to three poor young girls. These unfortunate women could not get married because they had no dowry. Saint Nicholas, wishing to do them a good turn in secret, threw three bags of gold through an open window. Thus his generosity made him the patron saint of children, but his three bags of gold also endeared him to pawnbrokers—who perpetuate the saint's memory by placing three brass balls over their shops.

Because he miraculously cured a man who was badly burned, Saint Nicholas is also the patron saint of firemen, and his legendary power over tempests makes him the protector of all sailors. He is also the patron saint of Russia, and of thieves the world over—but the reasons for these last distinctions have been lost in the mists of time.

EVEN our Christmas dinner had its origin in other countries of the old and new worlds. The first turkey was eaten in England during the Christmas of 1524, and this delectable bird has gradually increased in favour and flavour until to-day the breeding and marketing of turkeys is an important industry. Leadenhall Market at Christmas time is one of the sights of London, a veritable forest of turkeys—decorated with gaily-coloured ribbons—that hang from miles of hooks closer than leaves on a tree. About fifty tons of poultry are sold at Leadenhall during the Christmas week, and a turkey can be killed, plucked, cleaned, weighed, and labelled there for sending away in exactly ten minutes!

Then we have the indispensable Christmas pudding, which first arrived in England in its present form from Vienna about

the same time as the turkey, and its coming has since stimulated commerce in countries throughout the world. Christmas puddings require containers, of course, and the making of white bowls in which they are sold has become an immense industry. The bowls cost from fivepence to one shilling and eightpence each. Among the many countries which now grow raisins, sultanas, and currants, Australia alone sends £250,000 worth to London. The largest amount of Christmas pudding at one cooking is made for the three services—Army, Navy, and Air Force—at the canteen in White Hart Street, Kennington, and the total weight is over eight tons!

The first Christmas trees seen in England came from Germany, with other Continental customs, in the reign of George I. So great is the demand for Christmas trees nowadays, however, that most of those sold in England are home-grown. Yorkshire and the counties near London provide trees for the festive season in thousands, and these are grown from seeds set out in a nursery and trans-

planted when two to three years old. These little trees grow at a uniform rate of about a foot a year, and at the end of five years the first are lifted for sale. The wholesale price is usually a shilling a foot.

Not until the reign of Queen Victoria did the custom of decorating Christmas trees with presents become widely popular. Following her wedding with the Prince Consort, the young Queen gave a Christmas party to some three hundred children at which the centre-piece was a fir tree forty feet high, and laden with gifts. Since that memorable party at Buckingham Palace, the custom of loading trees with Christmas gifts has become an integral part of the festive season. The biggest Christmas tree of which any record exists was exhibited in the Central Transept of the Crystal Palace in December, 1878. It stood 120ft. high, and was lit by ten thousand candles and loaded with 20,000 toys. Another gigantic Christmas tree was cut by the late Duke of Norfolk from his own estate. This tree was 70ft. high, weighed four tons, and the presents with which it was laden cost £4,500.

AMONG the many familiar customs which form a part of the Christmas season, there is at least one which originated in England, and also gave this country what is practically a monopoly of an important industry. About Christmas time in 1844, a famous artist, W. E. Dobson, R.A., made a sketch symbolizing the spirit of the festive season and posted it to a friend. It was just a simple drawing depicting a family group toasting absent friends amid appropriate surroundings. This sketch was the first Christmas card.

Since the first Christmas card was dispatched the demand has steadily increased, and now not only Britain, which leads the world in greeting-card production, but almost every other country has adopted the custom. From all parts of the world huge orders come to Great Britain for Christmas cards. This custom has been responsible for a reorganization at the General Post Office. Normally, the Post Office deals with some 15,000,000 letters daily, but at Christmas time the number reaches 50,000,000. Some time before Christmas, 9,000 extra workers go into training at the General Post Office headquarters to deal with Christmas mail.



"No, dearie, it ain't a new 'at. 'Er old man's won a turkey in a raffle, that's all."

A DRAMATIC STORY BUBBLE of LIFE

By May Edginton

THE constable, leaning down slightly from his imposing height, spoke and said to the two bundles of rags:—
"Move on, nah. Move away. 'N if I hear you usin' obscene language when gentry's passing again, I'll have you up."

And when he had strolled on, Saul, looking malignantly after him, said to the other ragged one: "Some day I'll use obscene language to gentry and no one shall say nothing."

But as soon as the constable turned about again, they gave a hitch to their over-long and over-baggy trousers, and dispersed to their homes at a speed impeded by broken boots.

In Saul's home his mother was banging a little iron saucepan containing a meal on to the bare table. She had returned from her morning's scrubbing work, and was in her perpetual rage. She smacked Saul's head until he reeled; but his heart and stomach were set upon the victuals, so he endured it till she was satisfied, and at length she gave him a plateful, and they sat and ate together while he told her lies. He said he had been to school, but he had not. As soon as he had finished she literally pushed him outside the door again, crying as she so often cried:—

"Don't stay here. Go'n better yerself. Get on! Get out!" She always seemed to him very curious—and rather terrible.

Sometimes on Sundays, when they trailed long ways into far parks, she would bash him into a seat in his baggy trousers and tattered shirt, and explain life to him.

"See!" she would cry, "see the motor-cars go past! See them people all dressed up, and with pockets full o' money! The rich, my lad. 'N you listen to me! Some day you gotta sit in a motor-car of your own; you gotta have what they got; and you gotta get it for yourself. Yourself's all you got, and there's nobody to do a hand's turn for you. 'N you listen."

"Soon as you see a chance of bettering yourself—soon as you see a chance to get on, you get out and do it. You quit and don't have no tender feelings about me. I'm not breedin' you up to feel tender. What I want make you's a roarin' devil, my lad. Soon as you gotta chance you take it and go. 'N if you don't go I'll push you out."

And he said to her, pointing at the best car which went by:—

"Muvver, I'll have one like that. I'm going to be rich; I'm going to get on. I'm going to be so's the coppers durstn't speak to me wivout touching their hats. I'd better start in and learn. Muvver, what fellas want is to know a lot of 'rithmetic and geography."

"Get down to it!" she would reply. And probably she would end by swearing at him; but always she pushed him from her. She pushed him from her side, from her table, from their beastly room; sometimes she chased him from their very street; and she would grit out:—

"Get away!" Go'n look at the rich folks in the big streets. Don't stay here. Go'n learn off them!" until the day came which ended her demoniac teaching.

A neighbour—already sniffing in anticipation of a welcome tragedy—appeared to fetch Saul out of school. She ran him to the nearest hospital where his mother lay dying. She had

achieved the painful distinction of being a traffic fatality.

As the little boy stood beside her bed, so white, so clean, even to his young eyes she was vastly different. She, too, was so white, so clean. Her tousled hair was braided off her wan, square face, which had been turned to the doorway, watching, watching. And when he appeared, driven before the neighbour, her eyes devoured him as he ran towards her on clip-clopping boots between the rows of beds. They were in time; she had nearly a minute to spare; and as life went, in her loss she spoke to him her first words of love and longing:—
"Good-bye," she said, "my little son."

In a few days kind people, well dressed and well fed, were taking a sort of interest in him. Charitable institutions, variously recommended, were suggested for his upbringing. Brought before fussy dames who had come in high-powered cars to see him, Saul was discussed and considered. The court missionary, who was keeping him under surveillance pending negotiations, explained him:—

"Young as he is the boy's a perfect rip; just the same, there may be a great deal of good in him . . . parentage, my dear madam? Well, what can you expect? . . . Father, confirmed jail-bird, died in prison; mother's

character very, very doubtful. There's a lot to be got out of the boy, I'm afraid, before you can put anything in. . . ."

Eluding their vigilance, Saul ran away. He was saying to himself:

"To get on it's better to be your own man." He lost himself in the ways of the great city, and he picked up a living in rare ha'pence, by running errands, holding horses, minding cars, opening taxicab doors; and if he saw a well-dressed woman who looked soft, he begged of her. He was a very strong boy, and though he was spare with hunger, a first-class constitution was not yet seriously impaired thereby. He came by devious routes to the docks; hung about and helped unload cargoes; and stowed himself aboard the first smoky ship he saw preparing to go out.

Here, after hours and hours of fear among the lurching cargo—for it was dirty weather—he grew beyond fear, and never knew it again, not even when, two days out, of his own accord he betrayed himself, was brought before the captain, and asked for work.

"How old are y'?" said the captain, after the grimy boy had been well cuffed.

"Thirteen," said Saul. He was eleven.

One of the deck hands had come on board—or, rather, had been lugged on by a mate—dead drunk, and had died, sixteen hours out, of alcohol poisoning, so they put Saul to his job.

"Why did you come, darn your eyes?" said the captain.

Saul replied: "Wanter learn geography'n this is the bes' way. On ships."

BY sixteen he had worked his passage on many ships pretty well all over the world. He learned; he learned endlessly, how to tear the means of life from any place in which life set him down; how to risk himself; how to hide himself; how to trade; how to drink; how to fight. He learned men and he learned women. The wonders of the earth, the sea, and sky, were to him words in a text-book. Sometimes he really went to school—some night school in some English or American port where he might find himself for a week or two between voyages. Here he would prove himself a whale for figures. He took to arithmetic with passion; and soon he could talk finance as shrewdly as a stockbroker in his office easy-chair. His head was as full of money as his pockets were empty, and the black curtain, against which dreams are screened, was always spangled with whirls and deliriums of coin. When he was ashore he walked in parks or along highroads near the sea, and gazing after the triumphal dusty progress of some high-powered car, he would remember his mother; and greedy, but calm as one who sights success somewhere low on the horizon and knot by knot overtakes it, he would promise himself: "I will be a big man, too."

At seventeen he banked some money in London, and setting his teeth against the temptation of a riotous

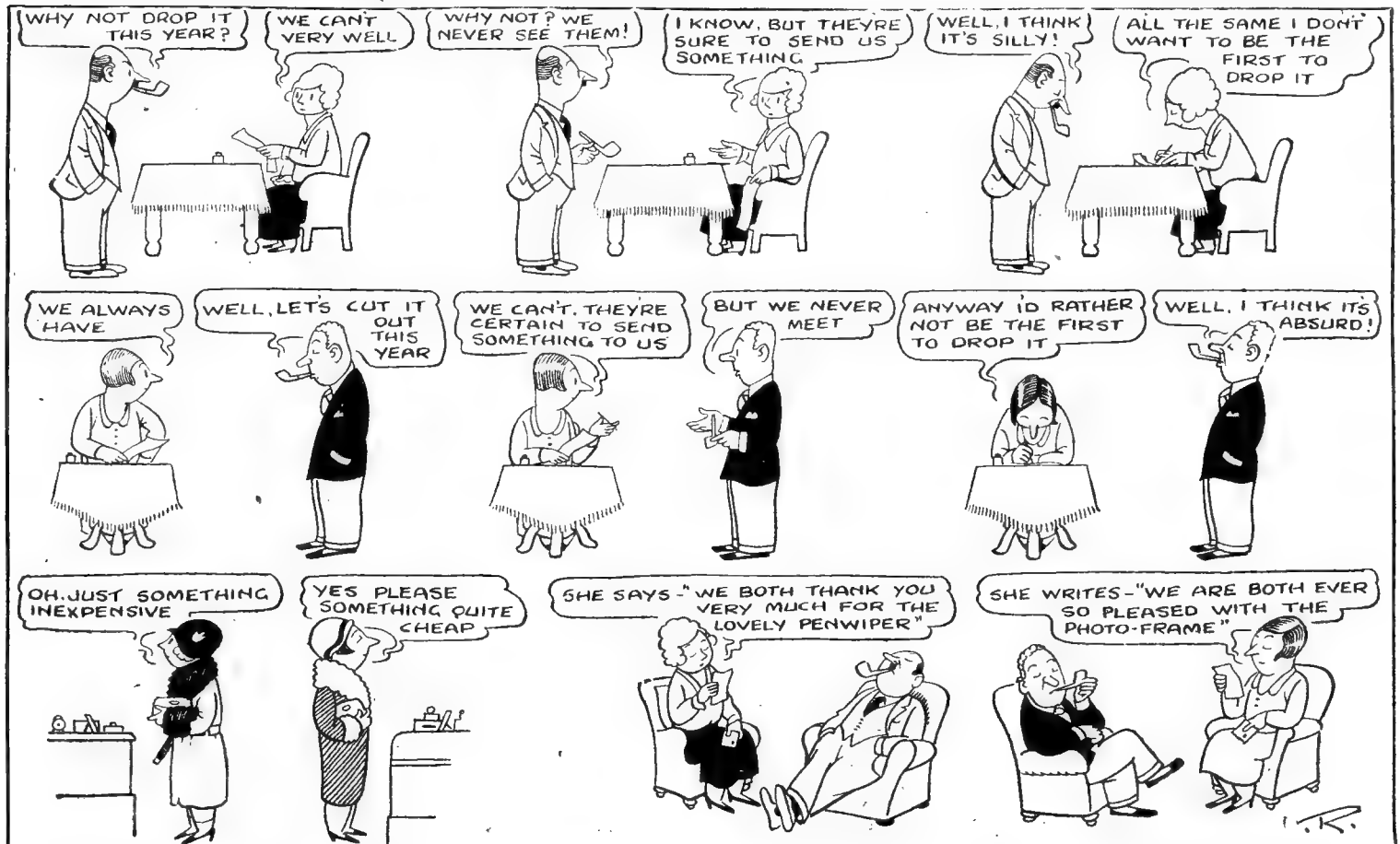
(Turn to Page 30)



He met the distended eyes of the girl. "How dare you?" she said, pettishly

THE PRESENT PROBLEM

Drawn by Ridgewell



CROWDED OUT!

Drawn by Wilson Fenning



CHRISTMAS in The ARCTIC

TO people in Merry England, who are accustomed to associate Christmas with the usual festivities, and especially the arrival of the postman bringing greeting cards and gifts from far and near, it must be difficult to appreciate the situation that presents itself to those that dwell a thousand miles north of their post-office, and separated by vast areas of ice and snow.

Yet even in the remote places of Arctic Canada, the festival which commemorates the Advent of Him Who is called the Prince of Peace brings rejoicing. In these places to which I refer only one ship comes each year, bringing the necessary foodstuffs, fuel, letters and parcels from friends in the Motherlands far to the south. Although the Postmaster-General does not see his way to deliver letters on Christmas morning, the lonely wayfarers in the Far North do their best to supply what he has omitted. From the departure of the annual ship, the men count the months between then and the eventful December 25th; then the weeks; later the days and hours.

I REMEMBER vividly that one of my Christmases in Baffin Land was spent at an Eskimo snow village, about a day's journey by sledge and dog team from the Mission House. The little dome-shaped snow dwellings of the people could be seen here and there, scattered along the shore line of the Bay. The sea was frozen for miles out as far as the eye could carry. The hills were mantled in white, and the deep snow all around gave the world the kind of appearance that Christmas is supposed to have in England, but which generally does not materialize.

The house in which I was living had been built by my Eskimo friends out of blocks of snow, about thirty inches square, and from six to nine inches thick. A piece of relatively clear ice from a nearby freshwater lake supplied me with a very serviceable window. A prehistoric lamp, made of soap stone, in the bowl of which seal blubber was used instead of oil, and dried moss from the hills mixed with the bloom of the cottonweed acted as wick, had been set up in the left-hand side of the little hole we called the door. From this lamp we obtained both light and heat. On the sleeping bench, which was made of snow, the Eskimo had spread a number of caribou and wolf skins, and I had a nice warm caribou-skin sleeping bag in which to spend the night watches.

There were no chairs, no tables, but we squatted on top of the skins covering the snow. Strange as these surroundings may appear, and uncomfortable as they undoubtedly were when one considers even the poorest accommodation in England, we had a joyous Christmas.

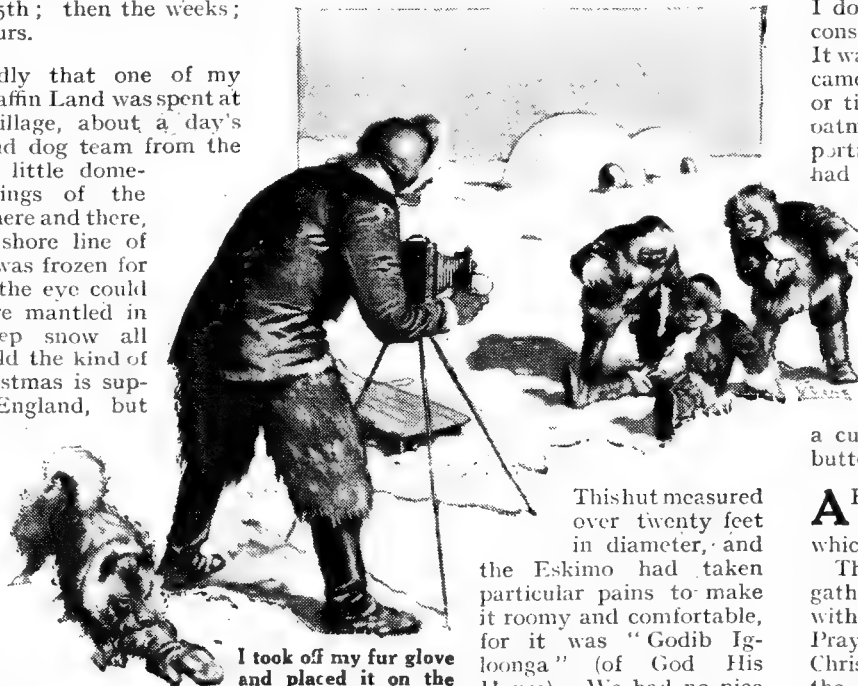
It should be explained that at Christmas-tide we are passing through the darkest season of the year, and the farther north you

By the Right Reverend A. L. Fleming, D.D.,
BISHOP OF THE ARCTIC

As Bishop of the Arctic, Dr. Fleming has the largest diocese in the world. It is about twelve times the size of Great Britain and extends across most of Northern Canada. It takes him two summers to visit all his missions.

go, the longer and deeper is this period of night. At our most northerly Mission to-day, the darkness lasts for twelve weeks without a break.

On Christmas morning I was up early to arrange matters and see that everything was in order for our first service, which was to be held in the largest snow hut in the village.



I took off my fur glove and placed it on the snow behind me

This hut measured over twenty feet in diameter, and the Eskimo had taken particular pains to make it roomy and comfortable, for it was "Godib Iglooonga" (of God His House). We had no nice fittings such as can be

seen in any village church in England, but a sledge box wrapped round with spotless white towels provided an improvised altar. We had a very useful set of silver and linen for the Holy Communion, these latter having been sent out from the Old Country for this particular work.

The Eskimo in the district had never had a Christmas in their village before; consequently there was great excitement. When a steel spearhead was struck with a large nail, a bell-like sound was obtained that rang through the crisp air. This was the signal to call the people to service, and at once the villagers crushed their way into the little snow church and the porch outside. There was not room for all, and so we had to request the children to stay outside. This they did with the greatest patience, and listened, I believe, to every word that was read or spoken, and joined lustily in the hymns.

It seemed to us that the Christ Child Who

came in poverty on that first Christmas morning was present in special measure at that Celebration of the Holy Feast. He Who came

to bring peace and goodwill to men so long ago had truly brought peace and goodwill to these wild, savage nomads of the Arctic. As I watched their faces, alight with the joy of that inner gladness that comes from heart-ease, I could only pray that the Saviour might indeed fill them more and more with the warmth of His undying love.

The Eskimo live in the cold, barren lands of Canada, but there is nothing cold about their loving natures. Those of us who have been privileged to know them intimately know that under their copper skins beat the most loyal of hearts.

The service over, the people passed out of the church to meet at another point in the village, where three snow huts were joined together by a common porch. Here it was arranged that we should have our breakfast. I do not think many of my readers would consider that breakfast in any sense a feast. It was the simplest of meals. Each individual came with an enamelled plate, a dish cover, or tin lid, and received a large spoonful of oatmeal porridge, on top of which a small portion of molasses was sprinkled. When all had received this first item on the menu,

then each came bringing a mug or tinny, which was filled with coffee sweetened with molasses, and two hardtack biscuits (dry). This constituted the feast, and I have never seen people more grateful than were these Eskimo on that occasion.

The meal over, the missionary returned to his igloo to partake of a frugal breakfast consisting of a cup of tea, some hardtack biscuit with butter and marmalade.

ABOUT noon, the Eskimo took part in a series of games and races, at the close of which prizes were presented to the winners.

The day closed with the whole company gathering together to partake of seal stew with hardtack biscuit, followed by Evening Prayer and the singing of a number of Christmas hymns. In the interval between the games and the second service, the missionary opened a number of letters and parcels that had come out the previous summer from friends in different parts of the world, but marked, "For Christmas." The thrill that came to him was just as great as the thrill that comes to anyone who receives a letter or gift on Christmas morning.

One incident in this connection is worth mentioning. Early in the afternoon I saw some children at play, and thought they would make a nice picture. I set up my camera to take a photograph, but in order to adjust the shutter properly, I took off my fur glove and placed it on the snow behind me. After the photograph had been taken, and I was closing the camera, I could not locate the glove. Questioning a small child named Koo-muk-shak, I was quietly informed that a dog had eaten the glove.

Poor beast! It would have been un-Christian to grudge him a snack on Christmas Day, but it was difficult to see how he could get much nourishment out of a dry sealskin glove.

BUBBLE OF LIFE

(Continued
from Page
27)

spending such as his mates were enjoying, he left it there against the uncertain time that he should come again. And at nineteen he came again, and turned his back upon the sea.

He loved her as nearly as he loved anything; that is to say, she tore at some vital part of him that in other lads of his age was a heart; but she was no good to

him. Beautiful and moody as she showed, balmy as was her salt breath, wonderful as had been the far shores, the great ports, the mountains, the dawns, the sunsets to which she had carried him; he cast off her spell and forsook her. Wide as were her blue and heaving plains, free as were her highways, he turned and cramped himself within the city, for he had learned of her enough.

He took out some of his money, went to a fine store, and bought himself clothes. He could not but despise the soft-tongued man who attended to him, but all the same he saw that he looked very well; very, well indeed. "Fit me out like you," he said, abruptly. It was a blue lounge suit, a soft shirt to tone, a tie to match. He went out clothed for the city.

He went to a ship-broking firm of which he knew by hearsay, for he had kept his ears open to everything concerning the trade. He knew a lot now. Entering the office he asked straight away for the boss. Denied, he waited; and putting aside prevarication at last he saw him.

It was the firm of Hendriks, Brown and Pollen; and he got his first landsman's job.

"Anything at any wage," he argued, "for a start. Then we can see." Eh? "Can't we?"

"Yes," said old Hendriks, who knew a man when he saw one.

And for a while they talked freights. The boy was able to tell old Hendriks the true inner tales of many cargoes shipped by this very firm or their rivals; he had all the ups and downs of freight rates at his tongue's end, and he knew the honest captains and dishonest captains of the smaller trading lines; and he himself had shipped with big fry and little fry, learning from all.

"Why, my lad," said old Hendriks, when he had sounded this unusual new addition to his clerical staff, "have you left the sea?"

"I gotta learn other things," said Saul.

"What?" asked old Hendriks, twiddling a great cable of a watch chain.

At this moment an ornamental young man entered the office; he was beautiful to behold, useless as a lily, and the apple of old Hendrik's eye. He was his only son.

This young man drifted in, uttered a few words, filled his cigar case from his father's cabinet, and drifted out again, followed by the gaze of Saul Kelly.

"Well?" said old Hendrik, resuming his question when his flush and glow of paternal pride had faded.

"I gotta learn to be like that," Saul replied, nodding his head backward towards the door through which the decorative youth had made his gracious exit.

"That takes money," said old Hendriks, staring.

"Yes," said Saul, "I gotta get it."

Here he stayed, making a little more money—

a little more—and a little more—and saving it; at the same time not denying himself a rampage now and again. When he rampaged he just got drunk on life itself. Until the first time when he thus let himself go, he could not have believed that anything in his carnal world would have tasted so good.

When he rampaged he went red.

He was twenty-one.

There was an elderly clerk there in a position of authority which he had gained by being senior rather than meritorious. And he was a weak man, with dependants on him, and a terrific fear of life. And on this man old Hendriks began to fix his wise, reddened eye, and the eye wandered from him to Saul Kelly, and back again and back again. In the offspring of the gutter, old Hendriks recognized his finest servant, his hardest heart and his quickest brain. It was not long before the elderly man and the young man knew they were at each other's throats, competing, the one for the retention, the other for the stealing, of the job. The elderly clerk did his work worse and worse; he grew ill; he did not sleep; one day, when the others were at lunch he did not go out, but stayed behind to be alone. In the office he was never alone; so with a terrible desire for solitude he stayed behind at his authoritative desk in his authoritative chair to face the trouble that he saw falling.

He cried. It was a luxury. He was a very timid man; and life had always been too big for him.

Saul Kelly returned; he always returned quickly from lunch, for his capacity for work was a devouring one. And for some while he stood near the crying man, unobserved. He spoke.

"Trouble?" he said.

The elderly clerk turned and looked at him. He nodded. "Hendriks," he gulped, "H—H—Hendrik's . . . he's going to give you my job."

"I know," said Saul.

"I'll never get another . . . not at a living wage," the other quavered. Then in his weakness he became passionate; he cried out: "You are a strong man, I a weak one. You have a hard, ruthless heart. You feel no pity. You will succeed. Oh yes! You will succeed!"

Saul knew it.

"You mean to be a very big man," said the clerk, crying.

"Yes," Saul nodded.

"Oh, how I envy you your strength!" said the elderly clerk, writhing his hands in a sincere and dreadful agony of despair. How I envy you your strength!"

Into Saul's mind there came one of the pictures which were always ready to be recalled. It was a filthy court around which the tall tenement houses were built. Himself, scarcely clothed, incredibly dirty, hard of body and hard of heart, wandered down it. He was unafraid, for he was stronger than any other boy there. Even then, he had a kingly feeling. Also, he was a brutal child. He saw a small and rickety boy run from an aggressor and fall in the gutter. And he stopped and looked at this weak brother, and then, jeering, he stretched out a fist and hauled him up. . . . And he looked at the elderly clerk and he saw him where the rickety child had lain.

DIMLY he, who kept no private laws in life, knew the presence of a big law somewhere in his being.

The strong brother shall lift the weak.

He went in to see old Hendriks.

"Mr. Hendriks, I've come to give in my notice. . . ."

"Your notice? No, no, boy! You stay with me. I've got a job for you. I'm going to 'rise' you. I've got something in prospect for you that—"

"I know, Mr. Hendriks."

"You know? Then, why—"

"A fellow," said Saul, who had by now learned pronunciation, "who means to win has to be his own man."

"Presently; presently," said old Hendriks "but you are not ready for that, my boy."

"Mr. Hendriks, will you take my week's notice?"

"I'll take it, then," said old Hendriks, "but remember: when you see that being your own man is too wise a game for you to play yet, come back here; there'll always be a place for you."

Saul returned. The clerk had dried his distressed face; was trying to recall his proper fridity.

"I'm leaving in a week," said Saul. "I shall never take your seat."

So he passed out of Hendriks, Brown and Pollen; with savings in the bank; a great physique; a hard heart to fight a hard world with; but something else also. He had made his first gift to any man; never before had he given away so much as a stale crust or an apple-core. But now, in a moment of time, without a repining, without a grudge, he, the product of jail-bird and gutter woman, had taken into his hands his all, and given it to a well-brought-up and pap-fed citizen in a black coat. He knew pity. God came into the brute.

Then he pitted his wits against the city. Newspaper man, bookmaker, bagman, promoter of wobbly little companies that stabilized under his resistless organization, he was all in turn; he found the way that money breeds. There were years and years of organization and exultant battle until at thirty-six he was a very big financier indeed—with a grey head.

SAUL KELLY sat, on a November day, in his London office. An exquisitely coloured meerschaum drooped from one side of his long and hard mouth. He had before him a litter of reports and balance-sheets, and his confidential secretary giving him confidential details of business which had happened while he had been away on a yachting cruise.

"The public," said the secretary, "have responded extraordinarily. The People's Oil Trust has half a million investors—but I have cabled you daily about that."

"I have always said," Kelly replied, reflectively, "that the small investor is the bird to aim at. And the latest reports from the oil-fields?"

They were placed before him.

He sat there while he went through them exhaustively. Men rang him up; his co-directors and financial partners in more than one great syndicate; men whose very names conjured money from little people who kept their savings in their pockets until they were more than assured of a sound thing. A group of men for whom he had floated a rubber company, which had never caused the public a moment's anxiety—one by one they rang him up and said:—

"You back, Kelly? What about lunch? I must see you. . . ."

And Lord Dover, and Bishop Inglborg, and the rest of the wonderful syndicate he had got together for the People's Oil Trust, Ltd.—they all called him up. There were one or two notes from women on his desk, too, and these he answered by giving telephone orders for flowers to be sent to the writers. And he went out to lunch.

His car was below. She was a long, narrow, grey Vauxhall, the last thing in luxury. He went to his own house for lunch. It was hospitably prepared to receive him after his absence, for he was a man who was always well-served. He went through a beautiful clear hall to the dining-room, where a small round table was laid for him. Here, when the butler had served him and asked with interest about his cruise, he issued orders:—

"I am giving a dinner-party—about twenty—in five days' time. Tell the housekeeper to let me see a menu. And, Meynell, the wines. . . . Even a white-haired aristocrat of a butler who had served some of the greatest connoisseurs in Europe listened with appreciation and respect when Saul Kelly discoursed on wines.

These fields of smaller victories to which he had won pleased Saul more poignantly, more exquisitely, than the greater ones. With a big

(Turn to the Facing Page)

(Continued from the Facing Page)

scoop he had bought this house and furnished it; with a big scoop he had bought the yacht; and another brought him his cars and their attendant pleasures; but the keenest sense of conquest was that given, as it were, by the accumulating, the amalgamating, of the whole, which resulted in those gracious notes from titled women on his desk, in the suave laugh of the Bishop over the telephone, in the admiration with which this knowledgeable servant received his dictates. To sit here and be served; the very feel of his perfect comfort, the very sense of the mere cleanliness of his body—these things were yet rapture. And sometimes he knew that never, never, never could he satisfy his hunger for them all his life; for the hunger had been so great and the rapture sauced it.

Before he went back to the office, he drove the Vauxhall round the Park; sometimes he did this just for the exultation of remembering. He saw his draggled mother upon a bench pointing out to him profanely the idle rich, and he heard himself cry: "Aluvver, I'm going to be so's the coppers dursn't speak to me wivout touchin' their 'ats."

AND to-day, in the Park, he saw a woman. There were, of course many; but for him just one. She was a tall, fragile girl with black hair and eyes. Her hat shadowed her eyes, making them look even bigger and deeper. She passed in a small car, driven by a man, and Saul knew him.

He turned in pursuit, as he turned in pursuit of everything he wanted, and stopped them. The two cars drew up under the trees. The girl was introduced. Her name was Marjorie. She had, of course, a surname, but Saul Kelly listened only to the first one. The man was her cousin, harmless, and married.

Saul said:—

"Franklyn, I am just going to drive down to Richmond, and I want you to persuade your cousin to trust herself to me, and come too."

The man Franklyn had no need to do this. The girl looked at Saul under her very long and thick eyelashes, and she saw the kind of man that women love; a lean, hard, blue-eyed man, tanned very brown, and with grey hair. The grey hair decided her, as it would have decided most women with a penchant for men. She answered for herself:—

"I must get back at six."

"You will do exactly what you like," said Saul.

She got out of her own car, as secure in the strength of her beautiful and alluring fragility as Saul in the strength to which he had won hardly; indeed, as she moved towards him, he knew that beside her strength he was weak as water. The man Franklyn was watching, with tolerant laughter.

"What shall I tell your mother, Marjorie?" he asked.

"Something she will like to hear, please," the girl replied.

Saul drove her out of Town; through Richmond Park. There was hardly a soul stirring on the many winding roads at this hour of a bright November day.

"Do you want the river?" Saul asked.

"No," she said. "Pull up under those trees."

So he pulled up and they talked, easily, because she knew what was in his heart, and he at least knew in which direction he was going and began to make his way thither with no hesitation. She lived in Kensington with her parents; he lived . . . ? Oh . . . Mr. Kelly? The Mr. Kelly? She'd heard someone speak of him. "You do wonderful things with money," she said, sighingly.

"Money is not so very wonderful after all," he reflected.

She laughed.

"Why do you laugh?" he asked.

"Why! Because money is immensely wonderful to expensive creatures like me."

"Are you so very expensive?"

"You ought to be able to see it."

"As a matter of fact, I can," he said.

"Do you affect to dislike expensive women?"

"I never affect anything at all."

He looked at her; and she sat very still.

"Marjorie," he said, "the science of short cuts is the first science a man should learn."

"You—you seem to think so. We—we were formally introduced, you know."

"Yes, but your second name makes an extra mile in the road."

"The road?"

"To you."

The girl fenced, a thing she could do with exquisite precision. Still fencing, they drove on slowly tea-wards. The intimacy of a secluded corner in a quiet tearoom was very sweet. But, presently they must drive back.

On the way, he asked:—

"This evening you are going out?"

"I am dancing. Yes."

"With whom?"

"How dare you?"

"Well, I dare. I suppose, like most girls, you take one or two favourite partners for the season. So, with whom do you dance to-night?"

"As matter of fact, it happens only to be Benny Franklyn. His wife's in Paris for a week. So I—"

"Deputize."

"Sometimes. Why not?"

"Why not, indeed? I do it myself—sometimes."

He drew up at the house she indicated, and alighting, she was about to thank him prettily and disappear when he sprang after.

(Turn Overleaf)

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BUBBLE OF LIFE



(Continued from the Preceding Page)

"May I come in for a moment and telephone?"

"Why! Please do!"

She led the way. While he was talking she sat on an oak chest, her fragile feet crossed.

"That Franklyn?"

he said, when he had got his number. "Glad to find you in. You were in because you are dressing to go out early? Save yourself the trouble, my lad. I deputize for you to-night. So long. G'bye."

He replaced the receiver and met the distended eyes of the girl. They remained looking at one another.

"How dare you?" she said again, pettishly. "Well," he answered. "I dare." He came and sat beside her on the oak chest. "Marjorie, let me take you to-night. Let me. Where were you going?"

She named an exclusive dance club.

"Let me take you."

After an interval of time, she relented. He was to fetch her at nine. She would not dine with him first. . . . No! she would not.

Half-way upstairs she saw that her mother was leaning over the baluster.

"What a nice-looking man!" said the mother, dreamily, clutching a teagown about her.

"I like men with grey hair, don't you, mother?"

"I used to," said the mother. "Now -I don't know." Then remembering her duties she cried, petulantly: "But who is the man, my dear? I am everlastingly seeing strange men about the house, and I do think I ought to say something."

"It was Saul Kelly."

"My dear!"

"M. Great friend of Benny's. Benny introduced us. Benny can't come to-night, and has asked Mr. Kelly to take me instead. I like men with grey hair. Good-bye-ee, dear. Must rest."

The girl went and cuddled down on her bed. She loved her life, full of delicious intrigues; not that she thought of Saul as an intrigue. She knew he meant to be something more devastating than that. A husband? . . . Well. . . .

"One has to, some day," she thought, sighingly.

SAUL met Marjorie's mother when he called sharp at nine with the little coupé he used for night-time. She smiled and gushed over him in a Bakst drawing-room for ten minutes before Marjorie came in. And he knew that money mattered, and was thankful.

He could dance. He had always been agile; and he had learned how for the same reason that he had learned about the correct use of knives and forks; how to choose wines; how to buy clothes; and so on. He was not one of those rugged self-made men who cling proudly to their early illiteracy. He wanted all; he wanted the earth, and as soon as he had the girl in his arms, he felt he had it. She, of course, danced perfectly. They had supper at the club. In the glare of night-light and life, she was the most brilliant thing; still white; but brilliant.

At midnight he took her home. She said good night on the doorstep; and as they parted he thought: "No. I can never do without her." He rang her up next morning; the sleepiness of her voice told him that she telephoned as she lay in bed. . . .

Later that day he called and she gave him tea. Her mother, a perfect woman, was out.

And on the third day he wrote to her; and on the fourth evening she consented to dine and dance; and again they returned soon after

midnight; and this time, as they stood together on the doorstep, she said:—

"I suppose there will be sandwiches; come in and eat one."

They were together in the exotic drawing-room, in the quiet house. Her mother, a most perfect woman, had gone to bed.

"I am sleepy," said Marjorie, with a tiny yawn.

"Wake up, then!" he said, almost in a whisper.

She turned and looked at him.

"Marjorie," he said. "I love you."

"Yes," she murmured.

"Are you one of those girls, Marjorie, who think they don't want to get married? Because, listen! You have to marry me."

He heard her quick gasp.

A few days ago it would have seemed to him not possible that anything so soft, so white, so perfumed, should come within his arms. But here she was.

So the next night at dinner among his twenty guests, and Marjorie and Marjorie's mother, he announced their engagement. And now he was so happy that all former conquests, all previous raptures, looked simply foolish.

He had beaten life.

"Life," he thought, as twenty-one guests drank his health and Marjorie's, "I've beat you to it."

The billiards-room was cleared and they danced. And he heard, with exultation, with Marjorie in his arms, droning through the song of violins, the ripple of piano, the throb of drum, the harsh music of a barrel-organ to which he had comforted his small body when an outcast child on the pavement of an evil-smelling court. He saw that child; he smelt the grime of him; he felt his hunger and thirst; he heard his ribald and defiant baby laughter. No wonder that wise and brutal child could laugh!

ON Christmas Eve Saul Kelly sat in his London office, with his marriage day three weeks ahead of him, the portrait of Marjorie looking at him from his desk-top, with his barometer set at very fair; and he heard that the oilfields were dry. The People's Oil Trust, Ltd., was a burst bubble.

He sat some while decoding the telegram.

In four hours the special editions were being cried in the streets; the Bishop had telephoned; so had Lord Dover, just starting for Paris and undeterred by the bad luck. The rest of the syndicate met with Saul Kelly at five that afternoon.

Marjorie rang up. She wailed: "Will it make much difference to our income? I'm such an expensive creature. No-o? No-o? Oh, darling! That's all right then!"

But even as the soft, white, perfumed girl smiled again, the cry of the half million investors ascended and was heard. Little people, sickly of heart, who could not face ruin with courage; who could not suffer equally the loss of so hard-won savings; lone women dependent on small fixed incomes now partly vanished; the poor fathers of families raved at by despairing wives for jeopardizing what mattered so greatly—all these were beating at the gates of despair; in person they, many of them, were besieging the offices of the company. The People's Oil Trust, the greater of the Kelly enterprises, had exploded among mostly helpless victims.

Saul Kelly looked round the faces of the tables in the board-room at five that afternoon. They were rich men all; but men with families, with estates, with dependants, with traditions, with many and proper calls upon their large purses. Among them he sat alone as one who was his own man.

He was his own man.

He was not yet Marjorie's. Behind him he had nothing. He had come from nothing to sit in this handsome room among these men. Therefore he knew himself freer than they.

Procedure was decided upon. The liability was upon the shareholders. They were one-pound shares, half to be paid down, the rest to be called up if necessary. The crisis had arrived. . . . When the rapid and apprehen-

sive talk was over, the men went out one by one, leaving Saul last. He remained alone at the long table. It was a beautiful table bought by him out of his love for beautiful things, and its polished top was like a dark mirror in which he saw . . .

He saw all those little people sickly of heart, wan of courage; he saw in the dark mirror of the table-top as he brooded over it, head in hands, the terror and puny rage of that half million. He knew so well. He knew how it felt to be beaten twice when you have been beaten once. The second beating is so much sorer. He knew the meaning of struggle. He had seen weak things buffeted so that they rose no more. He had seen the sickly child in the gutter; the elderly clerk livid with fear of life; everywhere he had seen and known derelicts among whom he walked with the surety in his heart: "I am going to be a very big man."

And sitting there, as these visions pictured themselves in that rippleless pond of shining mahogany, he thought:—

"I am a very big man. But . . . how big a man am I?"

He wondered. The dark mirror clouded. And as it darkened and dulled he saw within it a face: a square face with eyes of light, of sorrow and frantic warning. "Ah, mother!" he said aloud—the first time he had been so near her since she left him—"ah, mother, here am I! Am I big enough for you?" And she tried to touch him; she reached up and pushed him from her as she, down in that pit into which others were hurtling, saw falling towards her—a small man and ugly—her little son.

He rose and walked away from her; he looked from the window into the street, and for people he saw there, he knew pity. He saw many poor people, strugglers, and he looked down upon them to see if the dizzy height between him and them would make his head swim; but it did not. He knew he was a climber who had reached the top; and whose brain was clear to make the descent again.

SO he rang his bell; and his secretary, who had been waiting about yawning, came in.

"Listen," said Saul Kelly. "Get busy. Get me the best firm of furniture brokers on the 'phone. My furniture is in the market. It is good; a lot of it's real old. I've had fun collecting it. Get me then a house agent—I will have Williams and Poole; my house is in the market. And then the Touring-Car Specialists—that firm, you know? They'd better sell the cars for me."

The secretary ceased to feel bored.

Saul Kelly went on: "The yacht—she will fetch seventy thousand; I sell out my interest in the White Tree Rubber concern; I realize every stick and stone on my little country place; and with my banking account—I keep a lot by me, as you know; it's my way—with my bank account, I say, I can touch—why, I can touch, in cash—"

He began doing a tremendous sum; and after the secretary had stammered and argued this way and that, he fell to saying over and over:—

"But, Mr. Kelly, you can get out like the rest. A bishop—a bishop's in it with you. Isn't that good enough for you? All these people—it isn't your fault they're let in. You can't leave yourself without a penny—a big man like you."

"Get me the prices I asked you," said Saul Kelly. "Ask my lawyer to step round, and the 'Daily Leader' can send a man to see me at home. That might—save some lives."

THE secretary, gasping, made a last throw. He caught up Marjorie's photograph—loaded dice; and he cast them.

"You're being married in three weeks' time!" Saul Kelly heard a man respond in a soft, slow voice: "Ah!—have that photograph packed up—addressed. . . . Yes, have it sent." He turned to the telephone, lifted the receiver.

"Give me City 200960. . . . That Hendriks, Brown and Pollen? Mr. Kelly wishes to speak to Mr. Hendriks. . . . Mr. Hendriks, this is Saul Kelly, hoping you are in the best of health: and have you kept that place for me?"

OPEN LETTER TO PARENTS

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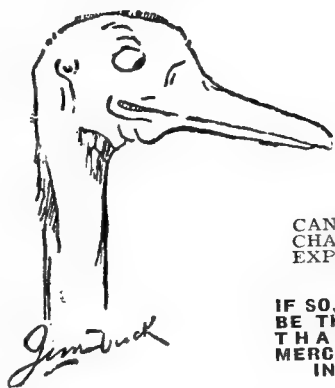
If you have any anxieties at all as to what your sons or daughters should be, write to me, or better still, let them write to me personally—Fatherly Advice Department, and tell me their likes and dislikes, and I will give sound practical advice as to the possibilities of a vocation and how to succeed in it.

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A CHRISTMAS PLOT

The GHOST of BENTWOOD

LONDON is a lonely place at Christmas.

Trevor Clements knew that. Once before he had spent a Christmas alone in the West end, a Christmas of wistful longings and envy of other people. Even a hard-boiled journalist, longing for peace and quiet, can get too much of both. The desolation of the London hotel had been unbearable. But Christmas again found him seeking peace—in a first-class carriage of a train from Waterloo bound for a village in Hampshire.

"Going to be a real, old-fashioned Christmas," said the girl opposite, settling herself in the other corner. "It's snowing now, and it's sure to lie. Hope we get some skating. I love skating at Christmas."

He sighed. There was no peace in life. "I do, too," he answered.

"I'm going to Bentwood."

"Really?" He put down his book. "So am I."

"Good, we'll be train companions all the way down. I'll be there for Christmas, and then back to London again, and then—"

She shrugged her shoulders. He pretended an interest.

"Yes? And then?"

"Who knows?" The girl looked out of the window.

The lazy snowflakes were whirling to the ground.

"Maybe Paris, maybe Florence—maybe anywhere. It all depends."

On what, he wondered. The girl was not married. Evidently she had money. She looked as if she had never worked in her life. Her hands lay white and slender on her lap.

"My work takes me all over the place," she said.

The position of the head and the expression in her eyes stirred some faint remembrance in him. He felt he had seen the girl somewhere before.

"I do think the country is so much better than town at Christmas," she continued, but he scarcely heard her. He was trying to place her.

As she spoke, he knew that he had not actually seen her before, but had looked at a picture of her somewhere. In a newspaper? His work brought him into contact with thousands of photographs in connection with news stories. In what story had this girl figured?

"It's good to get away from work for a time, isn't it?" he said.

"I'm not really on holiday at Bentwood," she confessed. "I'll be doing a little job there."

There was something in the phrase that was familiar, but the girl had passed on to other things before the significance of it had time to sink into his brain.

The journey down to Bentwood was unexpectedly delightful, but he discovered no more about her.

"Well, good-bye," said the girl, as they stepped out on to the platform. "It has been nice having you to talk to."

"Good-bye," the man said, miserably. "Perhaps we may meet again down here—"

"Perhaps," she replied.

ON the day before Christmas Trevor Clements was sitting in the bar-parlour of the Spotted Pig when Gregory Lamming bustled in. Outside the snow lay thick on the



By *James Wedgwood Drawbell*

Lamming wagged a finger at him. "Patience. I'm coming to it. It's a simple little plot. The family and all the guests would be terribly annoyed if the jolly old ghost didn't turn up, so I've arranged this year that it shall arrive."

"Oh?"

"Yes, you're going to be the giddy ghost, Clemmy."

"Meaning what, exactly?"

Clements asked him.

Lamming looked up quickly.

"Good!" he exclaimed.

"That means you're game."

Good man!

"I haven't said so yet."

Gregory Lamming leant across the table and lowered his voice. "It's easy, old man. Just something to give the family and guests a scare."

"Oh, I'm all for that. But what do you want me to do?"

Lamming waved his hand airily.

"Nothing—little or nothing. I'll let you

in by the back door of our house tomorrow night—just after dinner."

"After dinner! How nice for me!"

"You'll be all right," Lamming reassured him.

"I'll see that you get a good tuck-in later on. But I think that after dinner when everybody's in a nice fat frame of mind is the right time to spring a thing like this. Don't you?"

"Yes, but—"

"That's good. I'm glad you agree. Well, all you do is to get an old white sheet draped round you—I'll do that—and at the right moment down the passage you come. I'll turn off the electric light for the while and put it on later. Bright little idea, isn't it?"

"It has its moments. Tell me more about it and about the house."

They talked together for a long time. The bright fire gleamed behind them and threw their shadows across the floor and on to the wall, and they sat like conspirators over their plot.

When Gregory Lamming had gone, Clements dined at the inn and strolled out into the cool night. Already he was half sorry he had entered so lightheartedly into the undertaking.

CHRISTMAS day was bright and cold. In the morning a slight fall of snow came to thicken the already silvered countryside, and Clements went out into it for his walk. His course took him in the neighbourhood of the manor house. He wanted to get his bearings for the night's adventure. And as he was studying the back of the house, the girl who had been his train companion came up.

He turned at the sound of her feet.

"Hullo!" she greeted him cordially, and held out her hand. "Are you interested in architecture too?"

He showed his surprise, and she smilingly indicated the squire's house.

(Turn to the Facing Page)

"What are you doing here—like this?" a voice demanded.

ground and a keen

wind swirled round

the corners of the

houses. But in the

bar-parlour of the

Spotted Pig there

was warmth and cheer

for the heart of any man, lonely or otherwise.

Lamming strode across the floor and sat down

at Clements' table near the huge open hearth.

"Hullo, old man," he exclaimed. "I've got

something that's just up your street."

"Oh?" Clements raised his eyebrows.

"Have something to drink and tell me about it."

They ordered whiskies, and drew their chairs

to the fire. Curiously unlike each other in

outward appearance, they had formed a quick,

casual friendship. Gregory Lamming was the

eldest son of Sir Howard Lamming, and cynically

he referred to himself as the squire's boy. The

son of Sir Howard kept his father's reputation

as a good-liver well up the flagpost.

"Clemmy, old son," he confided across the

table. "You're going to have some fun this

Christmas. Game for a lark?"

Lamming laughed and emptied his glass.

"You know the dinner we're going to have

to-morrow night—Christmas night?"

Clements nodded.

"I'm not going to ask you to it, after all, old

scout!" Lamming declared. "No, you're not

coming as an invited guest, Clemmy, but you're

coming just the same!"

"This is interesting."

Lamming stretched his legs.

"We've got a family ghost," he said, casually.

"Every year at Christmas it's supposed to pay

us a jolly old visit, and scare us all to death.

We've been in the house for years, but it's

never turned up yet. It did once, but then that

was me wrapped up in a bed-sheet."

Clements stirred, impatiently.

(Continued from the Facing Page)

"Oh, that!" He laughed. "Yes, I was rather interested in the place."

"But that's the back of the house."

"Looks nice for all that."

The wind had whipped the colour into her cheeks. About the girl was a freshness and vitality that pleased and excited him.

She caught the look in his eyes.

"Have you enjoyed your visit?" she asked.

"I have. And you? Have you been working hard?"

She started.

"Working?"

"You said you had some work to do down here, you know."

"Did I? I forgot that. Yes, I have been working, but it will soon be finished—thank goodness."

Evidently his question had surprised her—she had not been prepared for it. He wondered again what her work could be. But she hurried on with the conversation.

"The manor is a wonderful old house, isn't it? Like the houses one sees on Christmas cards. I'm awfully interested in old houses."

He nodded absently, his eyes on the door of the house through which he was to enter that evening. He was interested in old houses, too, when he remembered that he had to walk through them as a ghost.

He looked after the girl when she left him. He could not remember where he had seen her picture. He did not much care. She was, he felt in his Christmas mood, a picture at any time.

GREGORY LAMMING'S assurance that Clements would have a good meal after the ghost had paid his visit was not enough for the hungry journalist. He had been let down in life before. So he dined at the Spotted Pig and his heart was gladdened with real Christmas fare served by the red-cheeked daughter of the landlord.

Afterwards, a cigar in his lips, he strolled leisurely up the winding country lane to the manor house. It was very dark and very cold. In the gaunt, bare hedges real ghosts seemed to peer out at him as he passed.

Skirting the house, he made his way to the road that ran round the back. The back of the house was in darkness and he chuckled as he made his way through the hedge and crept silently towards the shrouded green door.

He waited patiently, leaning against the door. The minutes passed, and Clements was getting bored, when suddenly there was a step in the passage on the other side, the door was opened quickly, and Gregory Lamming beckoned to him. "Good man," the squire's son whispered. "Everything's all right! I've got the jolly old drapery here. Get your coat off!"

At the last moment Clements felt an unutterable ass.

"I say, Lamming," he ventured, "isn't this a bit silly?"

"Shut up!" Lamming hissed in the dark. "Don't let me down now. It's the greatest idea ever! Here, catch hold of this. This is the chain the ghost is supposed to drag around. Quick, get busy!"

They worked hastily in the gloom. The sheets were adjusted, the clanking chain was fixed round Clements' waist.

"Fine!" praised Lamming. "You look the real thing. Now follow me and I'll show you the passage you've to come down, and the room you've to enter when I switch out the lights."

They went stealthily down the passage and turned the corner. At the far end of the corridor lights were gleaming. In the house there was a murmur of conversation from hidden rooms, and the music from the wireless.

"Wait here," Lamming commanded. "Stand against this door. In a minute or two I'll switch off the lights, and then you come along and enter the second room on your right. Groan like the deuce and clank your chains!"

They laughed quietly together, and the next moment Clements was alone.

He waited. A minute passed. Two. Nothing happened. He stirred uncomfortably.

And then suddenly something stirred in the passage. Crouching against the door, he stared hard into the gloom. It was not quite dark. The glimmer from the lights far down the corridor made objects distinguishable.

He waited. Beyond the corner he could hear a stealthy dragging of feet coming nearer. Nearer.

A shadowy thing—a grey shadowy thing—turned the corner and came into the same corridor. Turned, and came towards him, slowly, stealthily. Trevor Clements clutched the handle of the door.

And then the thing stopped, peered forward in his direction and gasped—a very human and feminine gasp. Then it did other strange things. It whipped out a flashlight and shone it on his face.

In the blinding glare he was helpless.

"I say," he gasped.

"And what are you doing here—like this?" a voice demanded.

Clements recognized the voice as that of the girl in the train.

"What are you doing here—like this?"

She turned the light upon herself, and he could see that the ghostly thing was a rather delightful dress creation in grey. "I'm here for—but never mind me! It's you I want to hear about. Quick, explain!"

The whole thing puzzled him—the girl in grey like a ghost, flashlamp in her hand. What was she doing with that?

And then suddenly he remembered. Her face leapt at him from a newspaper page in a flash of memory. Diana Raine—that was her name. And she had been connected with the Lady Ranlay jewel affair! What she had done exactly he could not recall. He had no time for the memory.

The lights at the foot of the corridor flickered once and went out.

Lamming had signalled.

(Turn Overleaf)

ALL THE SAME!

NO more the modern child desires
The toys which satisfied his sires;
The trumpet, drum, the jumping-jack,
And Noah's Ark have got the sack,
And shuttlecocks, and tops that spin
Are now considered "pretty thin,"
Whilst boys, at least, refuse to look
At any kiddish picture-book.

So now the badgered parent must
Buy gifts he'll never see for dust,
The fairy-bike, the scooter, too,
The model plane to skim the blue;
Or, lacking these, then parents know
The latest thing in radio,
Electric speedboat for the Park,
Or racing yacht may hit the mark.

These toys of intricate design
Would bore me stiff if they were mine,
Would make me hunger for some spot
Where things mechanical were not,
A place where my bewildered brain
Need not adjust a railway train,
A corner where no human yet
Had heard of a Meccano-set!

Vain vision of unvexed retreat!
We still shall loaf down Regent Street,
Still stroll for miles round toy bazaars,
Still squander wealth like kings and czars,
The kids emitting, at our heels,
Staccato yells, crescendo squeals,
And keeping, without let or pause,
Their weather-eye on Santa Claus!

For be it known to one and all,
They deem that ancient story "tall,"
And openly and frankly sneer
At Father Christmas and his "deer,"
And marvel kids e'er thought it true
The Saint should dare the sooty flue;
But, though they think his story lame,
They hang their stocking all the same!

A. B. COOPER.



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The GHOST of BENTWOOD

Diana Raine clutched at him as he moved forward into the gloom, but he slipped from her grasp and ran down the corridor, his chains clanking. He went past the first door and on to the second.

But before he reached it it was pulled open from within, and Gregory Lamming stepped out into the passage.

"I'll see about the lights," he called out

loudly to the murmuring people in the room behind. And to Clements he whispered, "In you go, old man, and scare them like the deuce!"

Clements groaned. He groaned sincerely, because again he felt the complete fool. But he groaned only once. The ghostly affair did not come off. The people in the room were coming to the door, and before Clements could enter and play his part, they were at the door and they were upon him. He was not noticed. He was a ghost disregarded . . . until a young man collided with him and seized his arm.

"I say," bawled the young man at the top of his voice. "Look who's here."

They crowded round Clements.

"Fetch a light, someone!"

Somebody scratched a match.

"A ghost!"

"Ghost?" Squire Lamming muttered, pressing forward. "Ghost be hanged. This is some fellow dressed up for the part. What the—"

"Burglars!" shrieked a woman. In a moment the place was in an uproar.

Clements broke loose, and in a phase of returned sanity he decided that the safest place for him was somewhere in the cool and welcome dark outside the manor house. He managed to slip the white sheets off his body. The chains he threw with a curse into a corner, and then he made his way up the passage towards the back door. At any moment he expected Gregory Lamming to switch on the electric light again.

Luckily for him he reached the back door in safety, and behind him he could hear the crowd still struggling and shouting.

"Gosh! Well out of that," he muttered, and wrenched the door open.

"Just a moment please," said a voice in his ear, and he turned to stare into the eyes of Diana Raine. "Haven't you forgotten your coat?"

He remembered the coat he had taken off when Lamming had draped him in the white sheets, and was surprised now to see it in the girl's hand.

"Thanks. Very good of you."

The girl helped him to put it on.

"And I'll advise you," she whispered, "to get back to

the Spotted Pig just as quickly as you can. If you like, you can ask me to have lunch with you there to-morrow."

In the gloom he stared at her.

"I say, what the—"

"Quick!" she said. "Get away. You've come out of this better than you deserve."

He obeyed her in spite of himself, and in a moment was forcing his way back through the hedge on to the high road that ran behind the manor house.

DIANA RAINE smiled to him over their table in the cosy Spotted Pig.

"You were very foolish," she said.

"Didn't you know that Lady Denham was visiting the manor house?"

Puzzled, he waited for her to continue.

"And Lady Denham's pearl necklace is world-famed," the girl continued. "It's so valuable that she employs a detective to be constantly with her to protect it. That was a big responsibility for the manor house."

"Go on."

"And when you have a fool of a spendthrift son of the house up to his ears in debt and a devil-may-care journalist who willingly makes himself an ass, you have all the ingredients for

(Continued from the a first-class conviction
Preceding Page) on circumstantial evidence."

"Meaning?"

She smiled into his eyes.

"I mean, Mr. Clements, that you have been the tool of an amateur crook."

"Gregory Lamming?"

"Of course."

"Oh, nonsense!"

She held up her hand.

"Yes, I know, you're going to say that Gregory Lamming is charming. He is. But at the same time he's up to the ears in debt. He has this pearl necklace—worth thousands of pounds—flaunted in his face, and he determines to get it. He used you as the ghost of the manor house for two purposes. First, he wanted a confusion in which he could obtain the necklace, and secondly he knew that you would be caught on the premises and that suspicion would immediately rest on you. He would have disowned all knowledge of your scheme."

Clements stared at the girl.

"It's all quite true," she said. "It came about almost as he had planned—except that I was there."

"And what part did you play?"

There was a moment's silence.

"I'm sorry to say I played eavesdropper on several occasions when you and Lamming were talking."

The man was silent. At the back of his mind he remembered the face of Diana Raine on the front page of the newspaper and remembered her connection with the Lady Ranlay jewel affair. At one time he had even suspected, when he had encountered her in the passage at the manor house, that she was there for some nefarious purpose.

"You see, I'm Lady Denham's private detective," the girl said.

—X—

THE temperance orator was in great form.

"Have you noticed who the people are with money?" he demanded. "The publicans! Who is it that can afford to buy furs? The publican's wife. Who has the most money to spend? The publicans." He paused to regain his breath, and then went on again: "And who is it that pays for all their pleasures? You! They lead a life of luxury on your money."

A month later a husband and wife who had been in the audience met the lecturer and thanked him for his splendid advice.

"Ah," he said, "I'm glad, then, that you've given up drink."

"Oh, it isn't that," said the husband. "We've bought a pub. It's great."

AN elderly woman was asked which she thought were happier, people who were married or people who were not.

"Well, I don't know," she said. "Sometimes I think there are as many is that ain't as ain't that is."



Philosophical Postman (climbing half-a-mile through deep snow to lonely house): "Well, there's one thing—the 'ouse was shut up all through that 'ot spell last summer!"

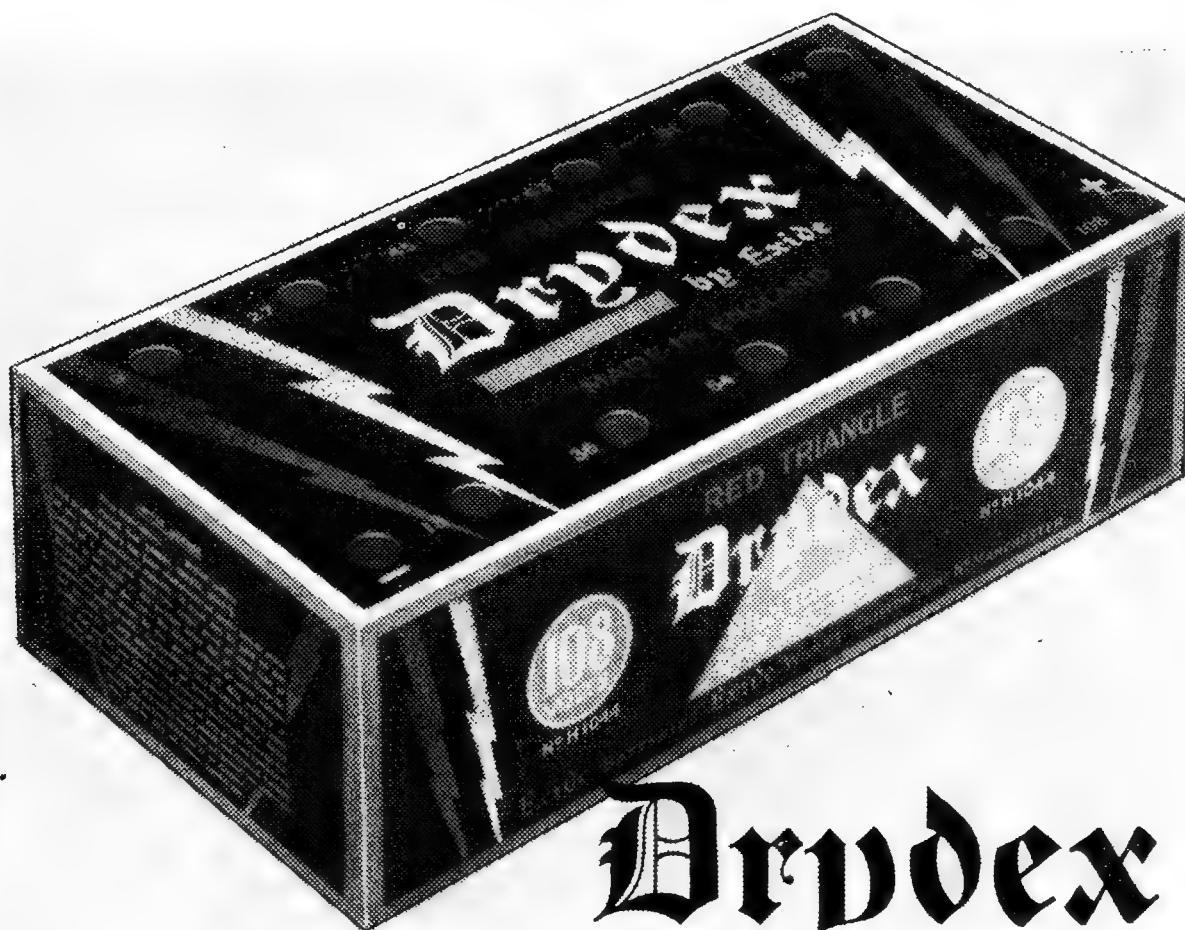


*“When was Aunt Martha
here?”*



“Wasn't it the day you got that Drydex?”

“So it was—that's a long time ago.”



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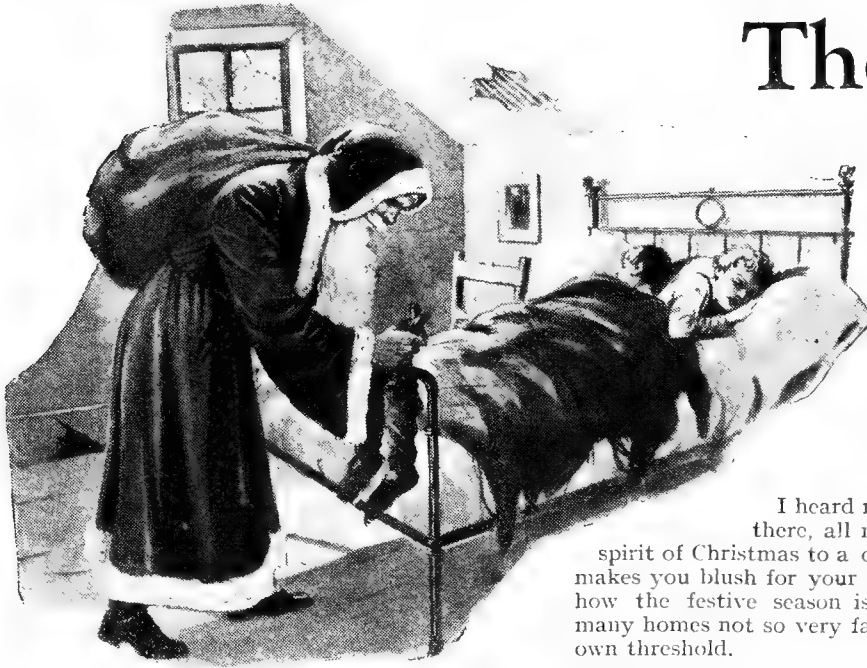
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A Really Happy Article :

I DISCOVER

The Real SANTA CLAUS

By H. H. Johnston



IN childish lettering, scratched boldly with a great faith, a note lies before me on my desk. It reads simply :—

Dere Santa Claus,—My mummy ses you will not have time to come this year and my daddy has not worked since he fell off a scaffold so will you please send us a Xmas dinner with a plum pudding with holly. I once thought of a doll—with love from Jane Little, age 11 past.

That last ingenuous—or ingenious—mention of a doll is irresistible. Its pathetic eleventh-hour inclusion reveals a tremendous hope once cherished, but now quite forlorn.

The letter was posted in a back street of South Bermondsey; it had no stamp on the envelope, probably because the writer could not afford one, or because her belief in a traditional Father Christmas was so immense that the mundane laws of Inland Revenue were beneath her contempt. And there was no address beyond the concise superscription : “ Santa Claus.”

Well, the miracle of it is that it brought a reply—complete with plum pudding and holly and, believe it or not, a doll which was the big sister of every other doll dreamed about.

A miracle? Call it that if you wish. It will not detract from the awe of the moment to explain how it came about.

A kindly postal sorter, half-amusedly reading the wistful quest for remote happiness and remembering his distant childhood, recalled that there actually was a real Santa Claus for children, and parents, like that. So he popped the plea into an envelope, stamped it himself, and sent it to the headquarters of the only Father Christmas thousands of British homes know—the Charity Organization Society, in Vauxhall Bridge Road, London.

At this cheery place behind Victoria Station I discovered that the artists who annually depict children posting their Christmas messages to a legendary figure of folk-lore are not so fanciful after all. This is the place where wishes come true, and where requests such as Jane Little's, if proved genuine, are faithfully answered. You might call it the Chief Workshop of Santa Claus, because there are branches in most cities and principal towns from the English Channel to the Pentland Firth, with

hundreds of voluntary helpers eager to enter into the spirit of it all.

I heard many stories there, all reflecting the spirit of Christmas to a degree which makes you blush for your ignorance of how the festive season is taken into many homes not so very far from your own threshold.

Take the case of Jim Dulsey. He is a clown. For many years his fame was international; but clowns, like other people, must grow old, and Jim Dulsey found it increasingly difficult to obtain engagements. At last he got the offer of a job with the Circus at Olympia—the pinnacle of every clown's ambition—but a condition of employment was the customary one that he must have two new costumes. Without money such a stipulation was impossible of fulfilment.

But—an acquaintance in touch with the co-workers of this ubiquitous Santa Claus told them the story. The costumes were provided; and during Christmastime thousands of people laughed hilariously at Jim Dulsey's antics, never dreaming that they were enjoying the living proof of the ancient adage that true comedy is a twin of tragedy.

THERE are stranger gifts than clown's motley. Mrs. Crum—her real name is known only to her particular Saint Nicholas—was forcibly brought to recall Robert Burns's Grace :—

Some hae meat, and canna eat
And some wad eat that want it;
But we hae meat, and we can eat,
And sae the Lord be thankit.

Because she had lost her set of false teeth she could not get work—although a job was waiting for her if she could show her teeth to advantage. And because she could not get work there was little prospect of her having a Christmas dinner, even if she had teeth to eat it with. But a new set of dentures was bought for her, and Mrs. Crum got the job which supplied the dinner she was able to consume with tremendous relish.

This discovery of a real, live Santa Claus outside the pages of childish fantasy has been an exciting adventure and a happy experience.

Ask the Gay Fiddler what he thinks about it. He is a cheerful giant of a man who played a violin for fifteen years in a city café. People had strummed and hummed and tapped their feet to his infectious music, and they had eaten their fill to his rhythm. His business was to spread happiness around—but sudden illness overwhelmed him, and he and his wife were faced last December by the bleakest of all Yuletides.

Along came Good Cheer with dramatic unexpectedness in the form of a weekly allowance of money for ten weeks—enough money to bring health and happiness back and to see the Gay Fiddler ready to take up his bow again.

So many well-intentioned but misguided philanthropists make a parade of giving, forgetting that charity is not puffed up and neither does it vaunt itself. They organize children's Christmas treats, march them into decorated halls and give them food and merriment, take them to pantomimes in numbered droves and send them home with boxes of fruit and sweetmeats—not remembering that the parents who have been unable to supply that particular form of seasonable cheer have been left alone with their thoughts at home, dreaming of what might have been had there been no such things as illness and business slumps.

But the Santa Claus of Vauxhall Bridge Road sees to it that the happiness goes *into* the home and stays there, where it truly belongs.

I learned of a family of Welsh people who came to London last year hoping to make their fortunes in a city where fortunes are so often talked about. Disillusionment left them stranded in drab streets which certainly were not paved with gold. The happy ending came when the distressed family were sent back home with sufficient to make the festive season a memorable one among their own folk.

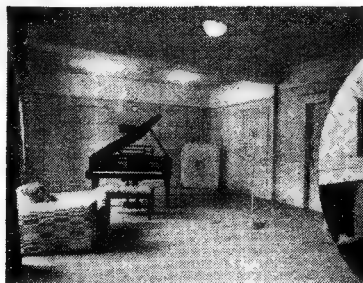
Letters like Jane Little's heart plea are not many, for the obvious reason that the people who need most say least. But in every town where the helpers of Santa Claus are filling the family stockings unobtrusively there is kept a list of homes requiring special consideration. Thousands of pounds are wisely distributed, and with delicate thought for the recipients' feelings; clothes and toys and food and theatre tickets are given where they will be most appreciated, and in many instances work is found for the breadwinners. That is the most wonderful gift of all.

In the workshop of Father Christmas, where his helpers are busy with this year's preparations, I was shown the list of “wants” for two districts, and the gifts promised by friends. Three different offers of food and money have been made by people who just twelve months ago were glad to receive, but are now more glad to give because of better times.

They say that Dickens haunts Vauxhall Bridge Road, with a chuckle, dragging a forever repentant Scrooge behind him to repeat his immortal oath :—

“ I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present and the Future. . . .”

Go to it, all you unknown spirits of Christmas! That's the stuff that makes dreams come true and keeps youth in our hearts.



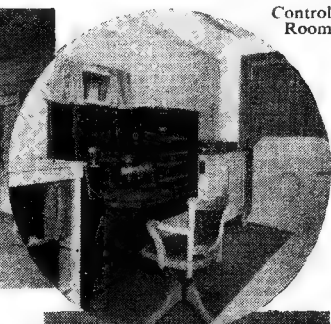
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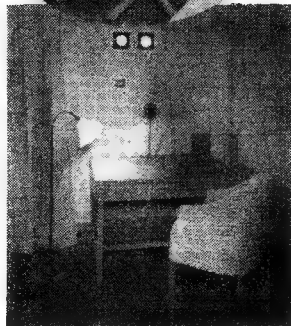
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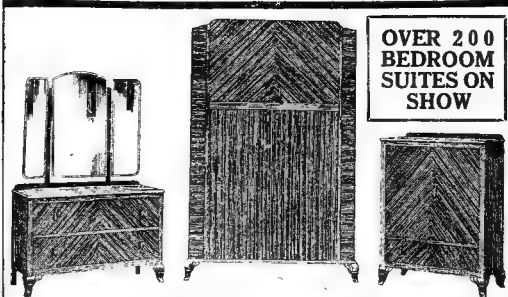
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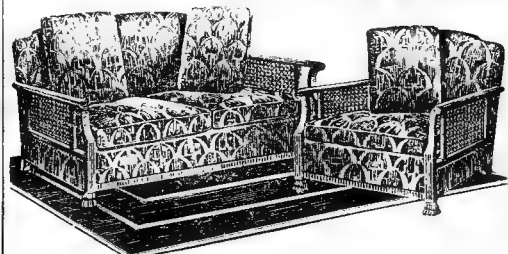


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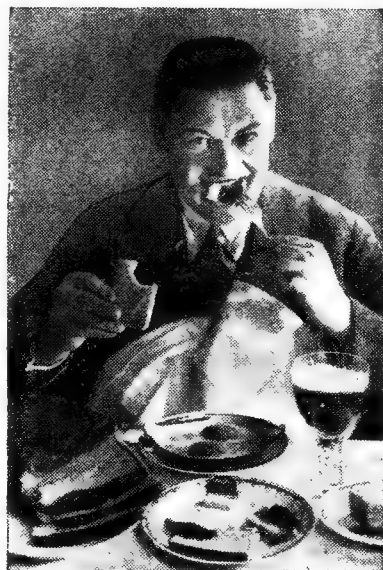
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CHILDREN'S OWN

MR. SNOWMAN'S CHRISTMAS

PAGES



"Hallo! Here's Santa Claus!"

A Play in One Act—to be read to children.

Characters: Mr. Snowman; The Christmas Rabbit; Santa Claus; A Policeman.

Time: Late on Christmas Eve.

MR. SNOWMAN (*crossly*): Thank goodness those noisy children have gone. **CHRISTMAS RABBIT** (*bobbing up*): Happy Christmas! Happy Christmas, Mr. Snowman! Why, what's the matter? You look quite pale.

MR. SNOWMAN: You'd look pale, too, if ill-mannered children threw snowballs at you all the afternoon. Happy Christmas, indeed! I hate it. It'll be a good thing when it's all over. Parties, indeed! I suppose you're going to a party, all dressed up like a Christmas Rabbit.

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: Ha, ha, ha! Well, that's just what I am. A Christmas Rabbit, and I'm going to give a party and I want you to come.

MR. SNOWMAN (*grumpily*): Umph!

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: This is a very special party and I want you to help me. It's the Poor Rabbits' Christmas Dinner.

MR. SNOWMAN: Bah! Poor Rabbits indeed! I've got nothing to give away, except the snowballs those wicked children threw at me. You can have those (*sneeringly*).

CHRISTMAS RABBIT (*excitedly*): Hallo! Here's Santa Claus!

SANTA CLAUS: I've come to see about the Poor Rabbits' Christmas presents. What are you going to give them?

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: That's just what I want to know. I thought Mr. Snowman might help me, but he hasn't got anything to give away but snowballs.

SANTA CLAUS (*excitedly*): Snowballs? That's fine! Just what I was looking for to give to the Ten Little Nigger Boys in Africa. Here you two. Help me pack them into my sleigh.

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: But that won't help me to find presents for the Poor Rabbits' Christmas Dinner.

SANTA CLAUS: Well, you give me those snowballs for my Ten Little Nigger Boys and I will bring you back a sleigh full of Christmas presents for your party.

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: Hurrah! That will be fine. Come and help, Mr. Snowman.

MR. SNOWMAN: Well, I don't mind if I do. I declare, my feet are as cold as ice, and I can't feel my hands, standing about arguing with you.

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: Arguing with me? You weren't arguing with me. You were saying you hated Christmas.

SANTA CLAUS (*shouting*): Do stop arguing! If you don't pack those snowballs into my sleigh I shall find something else.

CHRISTMAS RABBIT and **MR. SNOWMAN** (*together*): We're coming!

(*They gather up the snowballs and throw them into the sleigh as fast as they can.*)

SANTA CLAUS: That's fine. Now I must get off because, you know, the Ten Little Nigger Boys are awake two hours earlier in Africa than you are in England.

CHRISTMAS RABBIT and **MR. SNOWMAN**: Good-bye! Good-bye!

(*They wave as the reindeers soar into the air, the sleigh floating behind them like an aeroplane.*)

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: Now we shall have to hurry to have everything ready by the time he comes back. I know Santa Claus. He's as quick as lightning. He'll be back before you can say Jack Robinson.

MR. SNOWMAN (*laughing and showing his teeth*): I wasn't going to say Jack Robinson. I was going to say, what about having an ice before we start.

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: What beautiful teeth you have, Mr. Snowman.

MR. SNOWMAN: Yes; the children did make me a fine lot of teeth. These orange-peel teeth are lovely, aren't they?

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: Fine. Ready? I'll race you down the hill.

MR. SNOWMAN: All right; you run down and I'll roll down. It's quicker that way for me. One, two, three, Go!

(*Bumpety, bump. Bumpety, bump. Quicker and quicker.*)

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: Hi! Wait for me!

POLICEMAN (*stepping out on the path and putting up his hand*): Stop! Stop! I shall have to take your name for furious rolling. Stop!

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: Ooo, Mr. Snowman! You've knocked the policeman right over.

MR. SNOWMAN: Can't—stop—rolling! Sorry!

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: There. Now look what you've done! Rolled right into a snowdrift. Stand up while I dust you down. It will spoil my best white kid gloves, but I can't help it if it does. (*Takes gloves from his pocket and brushes snow off Mr. Snowman.*)

MR. SNOWMAN: How much farther have we got to go?

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: Here we are! We are going to have the party in this barn. First we must clear away the hay and straw and then set the tables. It won't be long before the Rabbits arrive.

MR. SNOWMAN: Here, let me lift that heavy bundle of hay.

CHRISTMAS RABBIT (*from under a heap of hay*): Hi! You've put it all on top of me.

MR. SNOWMAN (*dragging Rabbit out of the hay*): Sorry, I didn't notice you. You see, you're so little that I couldn't see you over the hay.

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: Let's ask a few riddles while we're getting the party ready.

MR. SNOWMAN: Yes. I love riddles.

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: All right. What's the difference between a riddle and two black cats sitting on a bun?

MR. SNOWMAN (*thinking*): That's too hard.

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: One is a conundrum and the other is a bun-under-em.

MR. SNOWMAN: Ha, ha, ha! That's good. I know one. What's the difference between an elephant and a pillar-box?

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: An elephant and a pillar-box? Goodness knows!

MR. SNOWMAN: Then it's no good asking you to post a letter.

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: Oh, that's good! I must ask the children that one. We must hurry. We sha'n't be ready.

MR. SNOWMAN: Give me a hand with the table. That's right. Up she goes!

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: I'll put the cloth on while you bring in the jellies and ice cream.

MR. SNOWMAN: Turkey first; everybody has turkey first; then Christmas pudding, and jellies and ice cream last.

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: I am glad you came to help me. I should have given them the ice cream first and the turkey last.

MR. SNOWMAN: Here come the Rabbits. Happy Christmas, Happy Christmas!

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: Merry Christmas, my dears. Take your seats. I mean, sit on them. Don't take them away because we've only borrowed them.

RABBITS (*all together*): Merry Christmas, Mr. Rabbit and Mr. Snowman.

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: Will you sit at one end of the table, Mr. Snowman, and I will sit at the other end.

(*They all sit down dressed in their very best party frocks and suits, and eat and eat and eat. Nobody hears Santa Claus come back.*)

SANTA CLAUS (*opening the door*): Hallo, hallo, hallo! You were making such a noise that you didn't hear my sleigh stop.

ALL THE RABBITS: Santa Claus! Santa Claus! Three cheers for Father Christmas.

(*Santa Claus comes in with a huge sack on his back stuffed full to the brim with toys.*)

SANTA CLAUS: Here's a jolly party! Merry Christmas, my little dears. See what the Ten Little Nigger Boys have sent you. Drums and trumpets and dolls and mouth organs and dates and figs and oranges—all for the poor little Rabbits who didn't get anything in their stockings this year.

CHRISTMAS RABBIT: What's Bobbie Bunny crying for? Lost his mouth organ? Swallowed it? Well, never mind. Give him an orange instead.

MR. SNOWMAN: There! Now look what you have done; squirted that orange right in Santa Claus's eye.

SANTA CLAUS: Well, I must be going. I've got all the rest of the stockings to fill to-night. Good-bye, good-bye! Merry Christmas, everybody!

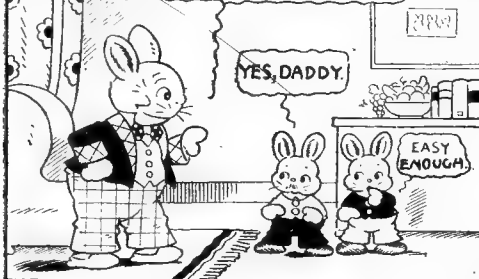
EVERYBODY: Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!

(Now Turn to Pages 42 and 43)

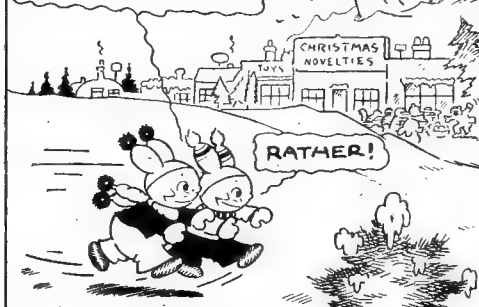


Mr. RABBIT and the CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

LISTEN, KIDDIES. I WANT YOU TO RUN DOWN TO THE SHOPS AND LOOK OVER THEIR GOODS AND DECIDE UPON WHAT YOU WANT FOR CHRISTMAS. THEN YOU CAN COME HOME AND MAKE OUT A LIST AND POST IT IN YOUR ROOM TONIGHT SO'S YOUR DADDY CAN TELL WHAT TO BUY YOU.



HURRAH! IT LOOKS AS IF DADDY IS GOING TO DO THINGS IN A BIG WAY AND WE'LL HAVE TO TRY AND HELP HIM OUT.



GEE! WE'LL HAVE TO HAVE SOME OF THESE FUNNY JIGGERS ON OUR LIST.



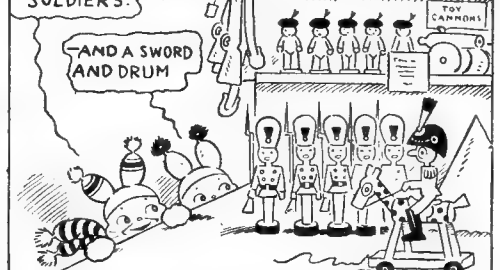
HO! HO! I THINK WE'LL PUT DOWN ABOUT A DOZEN OF THESE MECHANICAL TRAINS.



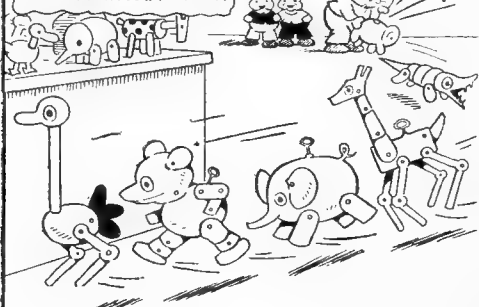
WHOW! WE'LL HAVE TO HAVE A LOT OF AEROPLANES AND—



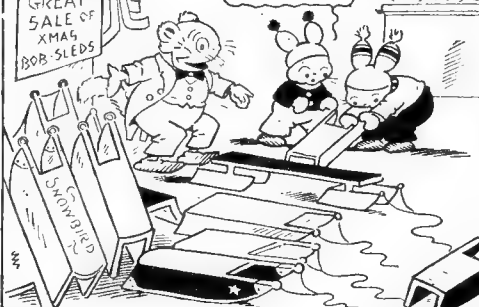
JUST HEAPS OF THESE WOODEN SOLDIERS.



OH, GEE! WE'LL WANT THE WHOLE COLLECTION OF THESE FRISKY MECHANICAL ANIMALS.



HO! HO! WE'LL HAVE TO ADD A COUPLE OF THESE GAY LITTLE BOB-SLEDS TO OUR LIST.



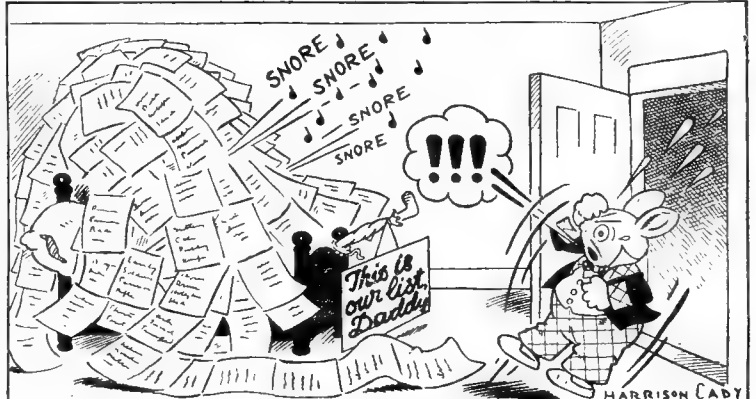
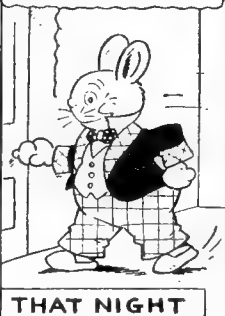
QUICK, MISTER! WE WANT ALL THE WRITING PADS YOU HAVE IN STOCK AND A BIG POT OF PASTE AND A BOTTLE OF INK AND A LOT OF PENS AND HERE'S YOUR MONEY.



HURRAH! NOW TO WORK. I'LL PASTE WHILE YOU WRITE.



NOW BEFORE I TURN IN I'LL JUST STEP INTO THE KIDDIES ROOM AND LOOK AT THEIR LIST AND—



WINKLE, WINNIE, And WAM

WINKLE looked at Winnie and Winnie looked at Wam, and Wam wagged his tail sympathetically.

"It just won't be Christmas at all without Mum," Winkle grumbled, gloomily.

"It's horrid of Grandma to get ill just when we want Mummy most," said Winnie, blinking hard to keep back tears which would come into her eyes, though she tried not to let them.

Wam just stumped his tail on the floor. He didn't know that a letter had come to say that Grandma had been taken ill and Mummy must go at once. And he didn't know that Mummy was right in the middle of making cakes and mince pies and trifles and jellies. But he did know that something had made his little mistress and master sad, and so he was sad, too.

"Come along, chicks!" called Mother, coming in with a heaped-up dish of mince pies. "It's a pity to waste the sunshine. What about getting out your toboggan? The snow is lying deep on Winter Hill."

"When are you going, Mummy?" asked Winnie.

"I am going to pack now," replied their mother, "and I shall be off in half an hour. No, I don't want you to wait to see me off. Run along now. I shall get on more quickly if I am alone."

TEN minutes later Winkle and Winnie and Wam were dragging the toboggan up Winter Hill; that is to say, Winkle pulled and Winnie pushed and Wam rushed round and round them, barking and trying to tell them what to do.

"Look at him, Winkle!" gasped Winnie, stopping for a moment to laugh at the puppy. "I'm sure he thinks he's doing all the work."

When they were at the top of the hill the children got on; the terrier jumped up behind, and they were off. Laughing and shrieking they went hurtling down the hill, and the snow flew away from the sides of the toboggan like the white water from the sides of a ship.

They had dragged the toboggan to the top of the hill again and again and gone rushing down, when somebody shouted: "Hallo, twins!"

"It's Paddy Kelly!" Winnie cried, dragging her foot in the snow to stop the toboggan. "Hallo, Paddy!"

A boy came running up to them, and they could see that something very exciting had happened.

"Here! What do you think? Eric's going to fly over Winter Hill soon. Come up to the top and let's wave as he goes over."

No wonder their chum was excited, for he adored his airman brother, Eric: It was not long before they spotted the aeroplane approaching.

"Here he is!" shouted Paddy, waving his cap.

"Don't be silly, Paddy. He can't possibly see you all that long way off," said Winnie.

"Listen!" Paddy went on. "Something's the matter. I can't hear the engine, can you?"

Winkle and Winnie couldn't either, and as they craned their necks to watch the aeroplane, something black and thin and long dropped suddenly from the machine. Nobody said a word. They were much too thrilled.

Suddenly a round something seemed to

float in the air, and then Paddy realised what it really meant.

"It's Eric coming down in a parachute!" he yelled, flinging his cap in the air and jumping up and down in wild excitement. "Eric! Eric! Eric! Do land here!" he shouted.

"As though he could hear you, stupid!" said Winkle, with great scorn. But really he was just as excited as Paddy, and the three children and Wam never once took their eyes off the fast-falling figure.

"He is coming down here," whispered Paddy, and in a moment he was down.

"Eric!" shouted Paddy, in sudden fright, as the airman stumbled, swayed, and then fell down in the snow.

The three children raced up to him.

"My ankle!" cried the airman. "It twisted under me as I landed. I believe it's sprained."

The children helped him to get his heavy boot off, but the ankle was already swelling, and it was an awful job.

"How am I going to get home?" he said, anxiously. "I can't walk on my foot. You youngsters must fetch help."

"Couldn't we take you to your house on the toboggan?" suggested Winnie. "If we all pull I'm sure we could manage it."

"Now, that's a good idea," said the airman. "Help me to get on the toboggan."

With a hop and a skip and a jump he scrambled on. Paddy and Winkle and Winnie harnessed themselves to the toboggan, and with a shout from the children and a bark from Wam they were off. Going down hill, the difficulty was to keep the toboggan from running away, but it wasn't

What a Queer Dream

*IF fish couldn't swim
And birds couldn't fly
And dogs couldn't bark
And foxes weren't sly
And cats couldn't mew
And parrots not talk
And canaries couldn't sing
Nor elephants walk;
If roosters couldn't crow
And hens couldn't lay
If whales couldn't blow
And if night was day,
Then it seems to me
That the world would seem
A very strange place
In a very queer dream!*

so easy to get along when they were down on the road. The three youngsters pulled their hardest, and at last they stopped breathlessly outside Dr. Kelly's house.

OF course, Mrs. Kelly made them have mince pies and cake and lemonade, and while they were eating the children told her about Grandma's illness, and that Mummy had had to go to see her.

"It won't be a bit like Christmas without her," Winnie said, sadly.

"You must all come here for Christmas Day," declared Mrs. Kelly. "I'll ring your father up now and see if he will come, too."

It was arranged that they should go to the Kellys' immediately after dinner.

"You see, we've got our own turkey," explained Daddy. "Mummy wouldn't like

A CHRISTMAS STORY FOR CHILDREN



"It's Eric coming down in a parachute!" Paddy yelled.

it if we didn't have that, after she has left it all ready for us." So directly after dinner they all got into the car, Wam as well, and Daddy took them to the Kelly's house.

They had some jolly games, and after tea the lights were turned out in the drawing-room, a curtain was pulled back, and the children saw a tall, beautiful Christmas tree. It was lighted with coloured electric bulbs, and from every branch hung the most wonderful presents. Winnie tucked her hand into Daddy's.

"I wish Mummy could be here to see the tree," she whispered.

Daddy gave her hand a little squeeze.

"Listen! What is Dr. Kelly saying?" he whispered back.

"I have a surprise for you, children," he said. "The Christmas Fairy has climbed down from the top of the tree and has consented to give the presents. Hand me my magic wand, Mother."

HE waved a long silver wand over the tree; the lights went out, and when they were turned on again a fairy in a white silky dress and silver wings and a starry crown was standing by the tree.

The little electric lights on the tree were not very bright and Winnie could not see the fairy very clearly, but something about her made Winnie's heart beat quickly.

The fairy reached up and took a black baby doll from the tree—just what Winnie had wanted.

"For Winnie," said the Christmas Fairy, turning round.

"Mummy! It's Mummy!" shouted Winnie, springing into the fairy's arms.

Then the lights went up.

"Oh, Mum! What a gorgeous surprise!" cried Winkle.

"Grandma is a lot better to-day, so I motored back this afternoon," Mummy explained. "It was Dr. Kelly's idea that I should be the Christmas Fairy. He thought it would be a surprise for you."

"It's the very loveliest surprise we have ever had," Winnie whispered; and Winkle and Wam thought so, too.



BALLOON RACE

SET two basins or soup plates at the end of the room farthest from the competitors. The rest of the company must sit in rows opposite to each other, giving the racers as much room as possible.

The racers are given paper fans (or pieces of newspaper stiff enough for the purpose). They are to fan the balloons, which are set at their feet, into the bowls at the other end of the room. They must not touch the balloons with their hands or feet, nor lift them from the floor with their fans. All must be done by wafting the fans.

"WHO'S WHO"

"Who's who" is both amusing and interesting. The hostess prepares a number of cards and pins one on the back of each player.

Each card bears the name of a celebrity. No one knows whose name he or she bears, and the game is to find out. Players ask questions of those with whom they rub shoulders—"Am I alive or dead?" "Am I a Hollywood 'star'?" "Am I English or American?" and so on.

From the answers of friends who can read what is on another's back, the individual arrives at the identity of the celebrity he impersonates.

As soon as a player guesses the name on his back, the card is unpinned and placed on his front by the hostess, a new card being pinned to his back. A time limit is set, and the player with most cards in front is the winner.

BLIND MAN'S WAND

FORM a circle of your guests. Then let one be blindfolded and stood in the centre, with a stick in his hand. The circle must be kept moving round. The one in the centre keeps the stick low, and with it touches one of the circle. The player touched takes hold of the stick, when the whole circle must stand still. The blind man now imitates some animal or call, such as "Milko!" "Coals!" "Rags and Bones!" and this must be copied by the player holding the stick. The blind man then tries to guess who it is. If he is successful, they change places.



LET'S HAVE A GAME!

MAKE THEM SING!

HERE are two simple games which may serve to entertain a musical audience.

Play on the piano (or gramophone) selections from well-known airs and see who can identify most of them.

Ask each player to put into a hat two slips of paper each bearing the name of a well-known song, such as "Annie Laurie," "The British Grenadiers," "John Peel." The slips are mixed, then each player draws out two. He has now to sing the words of the first song he draws to the tune of the second one. A piano accompaniment may or may not be provided.

MUSICAL HATS

PLAYERS sit in a circle and each is given some kind of hat, the funnier the better. A collection of hats is made beforehand and should include an old silk hat, a baby's hat, a policeman's helmet, and so on; a small bowler hat, too, looks extremely funny on a big head. The game is played in the same way as musical chairs, but instead of changing chairs the hats are passed round and put on when the music stops. One hat is taken away each time, but the chairs remain. The players leave the circle as they become "out."



JUST A JOKE

ARRANGE the players in a circle and place in the centre, on the floor, some article such as a book. Then announce that you are going to assign to everybody the name of an animal. Naturally, the impression is that each person will be allotted a different name, but you go round and whisper to each in turn, "Bear." Of course, speaking is forbidden.

Now announce that the moment a person hears his animal called, he must rush to the centre and pick up the object on the floor. Let there be a certain amount of mystery about what will ensue.

When all is ready, call out, "Owl." No one will move. You hesitate a moment and look puzzled. "Very well," you say, "that's not a good beginning." Then you pick up the book and replace it by a bun. "Bear," you shout, and the whole company darts at the bun.

Your best plan is to get near the door when you announce "Bear," and then make yourself scarce for the next few minutes.



HAMMER AND TONGS!

IN this game, two members of the party are seated in the middle of the room, facing each other, blindfolded, and armed with sheets of newspaper tightly rolled to form fairly stout truncheons. The rest of the party form a ring round them.

When the combatants have been turned round two or three times they are encouraged to go at it hammer and tongs, trying to hit each other with their truncheons. As a rule, the surrounding air gets more severely punished than either of the combatants. They must keep calling out, "Come on, Brother!" or "Where are you, Brother?" in order to provide each other with a clue to their position. No couple should be given more than three or four minutes, as the best way to sustain interest is to make frequent changes.

POTATO FIGHT

Two players, representing opposite sides in a game, stand at two ends of the room. Each is given two dessert spoons, one of which, holding a potato, the player concerned holds in his right hand, while the other spoon, empty, he holds in his left.

At the word "Go," given by the leader of the party, the two players meet in the middle of the room, and each tries to knock the potato out of his opponent's spoon, at the same time trying to keep his own potato secure. Whoever loses a contest goes over to the winner's side, and the game is continued until all the members of one side have been conquered.

An alternative way of playing the potato game is for each player to pick up a certain number of small potatoes, one at a time, with a coffee spoon or tea spoon and carry them, one by one, to a basin at the other end of the room, steering in and out of a line of chairs.



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A. E. SMITH, Yarmouth.

(Original of this letter and thousands of others can be seen at our offices.)

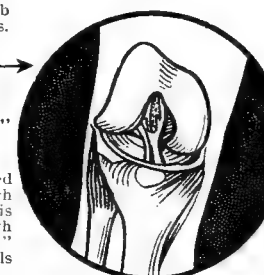
RHEUMATIC KNEE JOINT

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"Curicones" dissolve and eliminate the razor-edged crystals in the joints, muscles and blood stream which cause the fiercest tortures of rheumatic agony. Pain is banished, swelling reduced, stiffness relieved through the natural agency of the blood-stream. "Curicones" will completely rid the system of excessive acid crystals and poisons.

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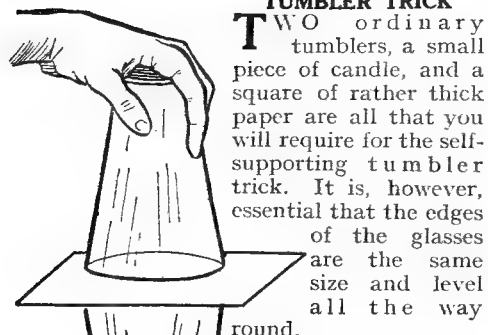
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PUZZLES AND TRICKS FOR THE PARTY

TUMBLER TRICK



TWO ordinary tumblers, a small piece of candle, and a square of rather thick paper are all that you will require for the self-supporting tumbler trick. It is, however, essential that the edges of the glasses are the same size and level all the way round.

First saturate the paper with water. Then light the fragment of candle, place it in one of the tumblers, and when the flame is burning brightly, place the wet paper over the mouth of the glass; finally, invert the other tumbler over it.

After a moment or two the candle will go out, and you will then find it possible by raising the top tumbler to lift both from the table. The explanation is that the burning candle has so rarefied the air in its tumbler that both glasses are held firmly together.

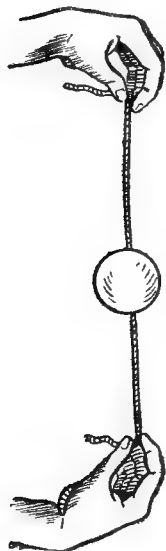
DON'T BE CAUGHT!

A MAN has ninety yards of cloth in a single roll. He wants to divide it up into ninety lengths of one yard each. He finds that he takes three seconds to cut each length. How long does he take to cut the ninety pieces?

Most of your friends will answer ninety times three, or 270 seconds. This, of course, is incorrect, because the ninety pieces are obtained by eighty-nine cuts, just as a length of two yards requires only one cut. Thus eighty-nine multiplied by three gives 267 seconds, the correct answer.

MAGIC BALL

GET a wooden ball, not too large, and mark on it two points exactly opposite each other. Then, with a gimlet, make a hole at one point, boring towards the other side but being careful to see that the hole does not go right through. Now do the same from the other point—and if you have judged correctly the result will be a crooked hole through the ball, as shown in the illustration.



Now thread a string through the hole from side to side. When this is done you will find that when you hold each end of the string perpendicularly

and pull it tightly the ball remains fast at whatever point you choose; but if you slacken the string just a little it begins to slip down.

KNOTTY

Place a handkerchief on the table and try to tie a knot in it without letting go of the hands. Although this sounds impossible, it is simple. All you have to do is to fold your arms, grasp two corners of the handkerchief, and slide the hands gently together.

FUN WITH FIGURES

Ask a friend to take forty-five from forty-five and leave forty-five. He will give this up unless he knows the secret, which is to place figures as follows:—

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1=45
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9=45

8 6 4 1 9 7 5 3 2=45

SO NEAR AND YET—

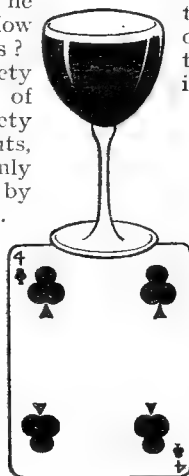
Few people will believe that you can tie them up with two pieces of string each only a foot long, so that they cannot get free even with the use of a pair of scissors.

Get them to kneel down, then tie their right wrist to their right foot and left wrist to left foot. You can then put a pair of scissors in front of them and tell them to cut themselves free. They will be unable to move either hands or feet; in fact, the only movement possible is the one made if they try to get hold of the scissors; they will fall over, and in that position be helpless.



A LITTLE DECEIT

TAKE an ordinary playing card and hold it up for inspection; then pour water into a glass until it is three parts full. Stand the glass on the edge of the card and hold it out at arm's length.



You do it in this manner. Show an ordinary card for inspection, then, without being seen by your audience, replace it by a card of the same value that has been provided with a back strut. By opening the strut, you have a three-way support, and the glass is balanced easily.

TRY THESE RIDDLES

WHY did the thunder clap?

Because it saw the lightning play.

WHY is a crying baby in a church like a good resolution?

Because the sooner it is carried out the better.

IF you were asked to sleep in a sea, what sea would you choose?

Acriatic (a dry attic).

WHAT has one head, one foot, and four legs?

A bed.

WHY is your nose not twelve inches long?

Because it would then be a foot.

WHEN can a nut be said to have a cold?

When it is a horse (hoarse) chestnut

A SQUARE DEAL

CAN you form a square with the aid of four pennies? Ask your friends to try, and see them puzzle over the solution. If you produce the coins, place them on the table heads uppermost.



The solution is afforded by the straight line found below Britannia. Put the coins in a ring, so that the lines indicated form the necessary square.

HERE'S THE SECRET!

THE Thought Reader goes out of the room, and the company decide upon an object in the room—for instance, a vase of flowers. The Thought Reader is then recalled, and his confederate points to one thing after another, asking in each case: "Is this it?" The Thought Reader replies "No," until the article chosen is pointed out, and then he says "Yes."

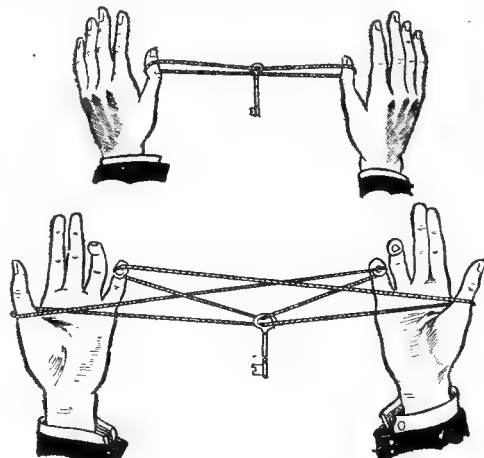
The secret is this. The Thought Reader and his confederate have previously agreed that when something black is touched, the next thing shall be the object chosen.

SIMPLE—WHEN YOU KNOW HOW

THIS puzzle is performed by tying the ends of a piece of string about 5ft. or 6ft. long to form a loop and holding it on the thumbs, as shown in the first diagram. Ask someone to put a key or ring on the loop, at the same time explaining that you will release the key without removing the string from your hands.

When the key has been placed upon the string and the loop replaced on the thumbs as before, the performer turns his hands so that the palms are towards him, reaches over with the right hand and slips the right little finger round the inside string nearest the left thumb. Perform the same operation with the left hand, thus bringing the strings into the position shown in the second diagram.

Without pausing, release the string from the little finger of one hand and the thumb of the other hand, pull the string taut and the key falls down, while the string remains looped on thumbs as at the start.



MAN WHO MAKES PANTO MONSTERS

By MARY BENEDETTA

RECENTLY I walked down Kennington Road to visit a unique Noah's Ark. Most of the animals were there. Their heads were lifelike, but their bodies—well, they lacked substance. Many of them were going off to pantomimes, for that is the kind of animals they were—pantomime animals.

Mr. Bert Meyer, who makes them, showed me more make-believe than I have ever known. Grotesque carnival heads grinned at me from nooks in the roof. There were cats and bears, life-size neighing donkeys, and prehistoric beasts with goopy, staring eyes. I could have bought a dragon for £18.

Mr. Meyer is helped by his grown-up son, Bert Meyer, junior. Together they make all the animals and look after the whole business. They even weave the skins of the animals on their own hand-loom. The rest of their secret is mainly papier mâché and glue.

I found them very busy creating new monsters to delight the children, getting ready for the usual rush and bustle before the opening of the Christmas pantomimes.

"Yes," said the elder Bert, "we shall soon have no room to move. This place will be choc-a-bloc for several weeks. Yesterday we sent off a twelve-foot giant, and I can tell you we were glad to see the last of him—taking up so much room. He's gone up North."

"What is that?" I asked, pointing to an immense bundle on a shelf.

"The camel," said Bert, senior. "One from the 'Forty Thieves'."

Young Bert got a ladder and heaved the bundle down. We undid it and found it was the most realistic camel, with two humps and a very mobile mouth.

By this time the Meyers were getting infected with the pantomime spirit. I watched them climb inside and bring the camel to life. The hind quarters hid the father, while the son took the front quarters. Suddenly the animal swung round and hit a gas bracket with its mouth.

"Here, mind what you're doing," came an anxious voice from beneath the back hump. After hearing muffled protests from the son, I assured them that the nose had not suffered. They may well have been proud of it. It was a beautiful camel.

"What does it cost?" I asked, when they came out again.

"Twenty pounds. More if it blows smoke through its nose. More still if it drinks as well."

A Family Affair

"ONCE last year," said the father, "I had an order for the Loch Ness Monster. It was to have a body twenty feet long and a neck ten feet long, with room for eight men inside the body. And it was for Bertram Mills's circus at Olympia. I had a lovely design for it in my mind. But I was only given three days, and it would have taken me at least a month to do the job properly."

That is Bert Meyer's difficulty. Nowadays people want everything done in such a hurry. He is conscientious and likes to put a great deal of work into his animals.

Bert has been making monsters since he was eleven years old, and his father made them before him. He began by making new shapes for people's legs, and tights for acrobats and dancers. But he took to the animals when he was older.

The "shapes" were generally for character actors, according to the rôles they had to play. If they had naturally thin legs, and wanted hideous fat ones, Bert Meyer got them ready—in papier mâché to fit round their own legs. Or perhaps they just had straight legs that needed an elegant curve.

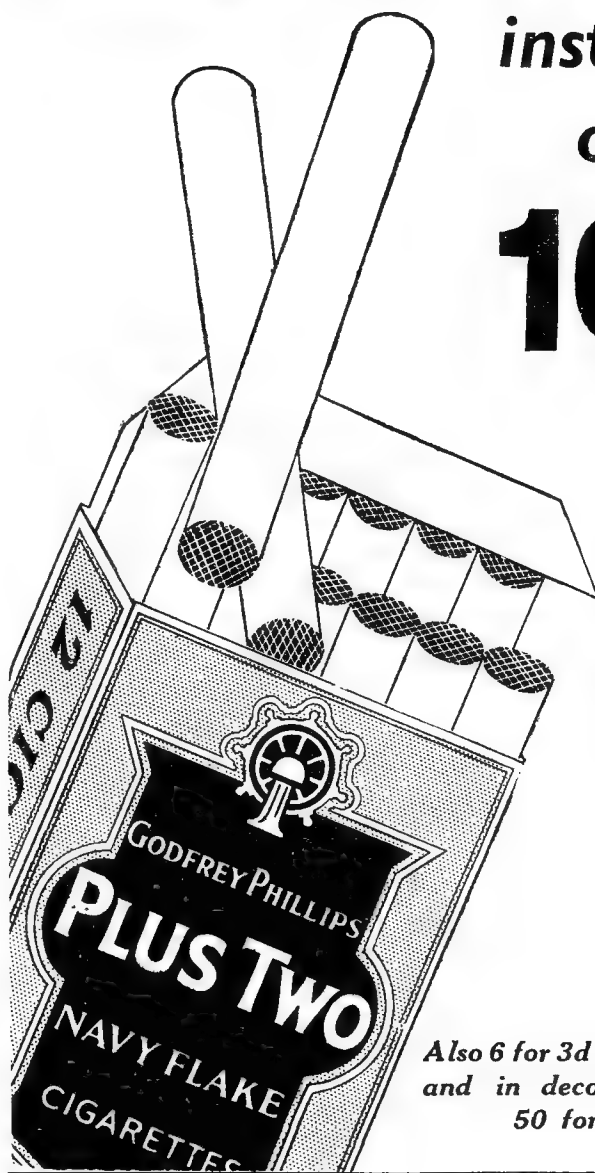
The autumn is the Meyers' busiest time. Right up till Christmas they are often working late at night, because there are so many last-minute orders from people who imagine they have a large factory. In the spring they are busy again, making heads and big dragons for the summer village carnivals. In between they live very quietly, having a well-earned rest and weaving plans for next season's monsters.

The Young Bert is devoted to his father, and means to carry on the business. He never wants to let it go or share its secrets with a partner. Bert Meyer, senior, has a wry smile and a great sense of humour. He also has a host of memories and a good string of yarns. He likes beer, fairy stories, going to the Zoo.

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A CHRISTMAS EVE THRILL

"EGBERT of ETON"By **DUDLEY CLARK****"GOING out, Bert?"**

"Sha'n't be long, old dear. Just to see about that car you're going to have for Christmas."

"Oh, get along with you, Bert. You're going to stand Happy Christmases to a lot of cadgers as usual. You may drive the Works cars, but you won't ever have a car of your own the way you go on."

Chuckling good-humouredly, Bert Stayler tweaked his wife's ear and went out. He continued to chuckle at intervals as he strode through the town which was all astir with the bustle of late Christmas Eve shoppers.

Madge was a rare good wife, but she didn't know everything. Thought he was pulling her leg again. Reckoned he couldn't save money unbeknown to her, did she? Well, thanks to the wage cut having been restored, the Old Man's Christmas bonus, and better luck than usual over the "dogs," Madge was going to get an eye-opener in the morning.

With the key which he was privileged to carry in case of emergency, Bert let himself into the big lock-up in which the Works cars were garaged. The night-watchman, after pausing to exchange greetings and deplore those circumstances which put him on duty on Christmas Eve, passed on his rounds. Bert switched on the light, closed the door, and ran an approving eye over a dark blue four-year-old two-seater "Wanderer" which, earlier in the evening, he had parked temporarily in a vacant space in the roomy garage.

HIS own car at last, and, if he were any judge, not too bad for twenty-six pounds ten.

You could generally get a bargain if you went a bit afield for it, and the fellow at Six Knolls, though asking forty pounds in his advertisement, had been easier to handle than chaps nearer London would be. For good second-hand value Bert reckoned you couldn't beat a "Wanderer." A first-rate light car at all times, which accounted for there being so many thousands of them on the road.

Bert wanted his overcoat which he had left in the car in his hurry to get home to supper. He had tossed it into the dicky when, with her late owner, he drove the car round Six Knolls for a trial spin.

To his surprise, the dicky appeared to be locked. He hadn't locked it, so the catches must have slipped. Turning away to search for a key, his glance caught the "Wanderer's" rear number plate. Though he hadn't taken much note of this, he could have sworn there were an A and two sixes in the registration number. On the plate before him there was no A and only one six. He recollected making disparaging reference to the slightly-crumpled condition of the off fore wing, and moved round to investigate. Save for a slight crack in the cellulose the wing was undamaged.

"Gosh!" exclaimed Bert Stayler. He inserted the spare key, flung up the dicky and stared down upon the partly-doubled body of a small boy in an Eton suit, across whose head had been flung a light travelling rug. From beneath the rug there protruded the handle of a heavy spanner.

The dicky crashed down again and Bert reeled back against the bare wall of the garage. It was a few minutes before the nausea left his brain clear enough to wrestle with the situation.

His first wild thought was that the cars must have been exchanged while he was having supper with Madge. But, being Christmas Eve, the works had closed early, and any such proceeding could scarcely have been carried out without the knowledge of the watchman, who would certainly have commented on it. Besides which the duplicate keys to the garage were kept locked up in the foreman's little safe.

He was saved further consideration of this doubtful point by perceiving beneath the steering wheel an empty cigarette carton which



A practised fist took him on the point of the chin

he had thrown down while driving that evening. Clearly, then, the car, though not the one he had purchased from the man at Six Knolls, was the car he had driven into the garage—the crumpled carton and the readings of the petrol gauge and speedometer, which he had noted, convinced him of that. Was the car bewitched?

Swiftly he retraced events since his purchase of the "Wanderer" shortly after tea that afternoon. They had concluded the deal whilst driving around Six Knolls, and the former owner had suggested wetting the bargain at Beechampton, whence he could get the bus back to Six Knolls.

The spacious courtyard of the Red Lion at Beechampton had been crowded with cars, for many week-enders stopped there on their way to the coast, and the Christmas traffic through the narrow High Street was pretty thick. They both had a couple and then the other man had hurried off to catch the bus. Bert had stayed for a sandwich and another drink.

Gosh! That was it! He remembered the beer was pretty good there—better than London beer, and he had half wished he hadn't had that last one. He was quite O.K., but coming out into the night air he had felt just a bit muzzy, though it soon passed off. But the courtyard hadn't been too well lit, and what with all that jumble of cars, and for all he knew half a dozen or more dark blue "Wanderer" two-seaters, the image of one another, and him being in a hurry to get home—he must have got into the wrong car.

So here he was on Christmas Eve with a corpse on his hands. For Bert didn't need a second glance (and, anyway, he wasn't taking it in a hurry) at that heavy spanner and horribly prostrate and inert little figure to tell him that the boy had been murdered. An heir to something or other, he supposed, and

somebody wanted him out of the way.

Bert remembered remarking to the barmaid at the Red Lion that there were a queer lot on the road that evening, to which she had agreed, adding that Christmas would hardly be Christmas without a murder or two. If she'd only known! He guessed the idea had been to stage a smash or something farther on, and the blackguards had stopped for a drop of something to keep their nerve in. Not that that mattered. Question was what was he, Bert Stayler, to do about it.

ORDINARILY a law-abiding man, he would not have thought twice about going to the police. But, he reflected, his story was pretty thin, thin enough for him to be detained over Christmas. And Madge. In her present condition, the shock might prove serious. You had to be extra careful over the first, everybody told him, and he wasn't going to chance anything happening to Madge.

A search of the car pockets yielded nothing in the way of identification, but there was a flask of brandy to which he cautiously helped himself. He felt much more like facing things now, and his brain began to work.

Simple enough really if he kept his head. It was a dark, dry night and not yet ten o'clock, so there would be plenty of traffic still on the road. He'd drive the car to some fair-sized place and leave it where it wouldn't be noticed till he'd got clear away by train. One thing, the blighters it belonged to wouldn't have informed the police. Last thing they'd do.

(Turn to the Facing Page)

(Continued from the Facing Page)

Bert wiped away with a duster all possible traces of his finger-prints, and put on a pair of gloves. There was plenty of juice, so he decided upon Reigate, which would give him comfortable time to return by train.

For Bert Stayler that drive out of South London was a nightmare. The casual glances of policemen took on a gimlet-like scrutiny; he fancied that the headlights of following cars were penetrating the "Wanderer's" dickey and pitilessly revealing its horrible secret. Occasionally the car would jolt badly and he imagined that the "thing" had burst its way out and was trying to attract his attention by poking him with the blood-stained spanner. Gradually, however, the crisp night air cooled his brain. He told himself that sort of thing would land him in a smash, and tried hard to concentrate his thoughts on the road ahead.

But his thoughts insisted on switching over to Madge and the baby that would be coming along in the New Year. Which was even more troublesome and absorbed him a trifle too much, thereby giving Fate at the Ewell cross-roads another opportunity.

It was the merest touch of the "Wanderer's" wing, but sufficient to tip a red-faced man, who was already wobbling indecisively, off his bicycle. Instinctively Bert [slowed down, but seeing no worse results than an extinguished bicycle lamp, drove on after shouting an apology to which he added, less loudly, a few unapologetic comments for his own satisfaction.

The red-faced man, however, appeared desirous of further and closer communion, for he started in vociferous pursuit, an effort which, though unavailing in itself, had the effect of attracting official attention.

Bert saw the uniformed figure step from the pavement and raise a hand, and knew that a crisis was imminent. For a moment he hesitated, but recollection of the brandy he had taken in the garage drove his foot hard down on the accelerator.

"Ten to one he'd take a sniff at me," he thought, "and that 'd mean the police court for sure."

As the car sped away into the darkness a backward glance showed Bert the constable striding grimly away in a direction which it was easy to surmise led to a telephone.

Bert Stayler swore, partly from fear and

partly from red-hot anger against the red-faced fool of a cyclist. He gripped the wheel and urged the "Wanderer" two-seater to do its best. Though by no means new it seemed if anything in rather better condition than his own recent purchase. His chief fear was that he might be trapped before he could leave the main road, and it was with relief that he found himself, a mile farther on, able to turn sharp left and make good, if less smooth, going in the direction

and walk until he reached Coulsdon or picked up a bus. Gosh, this was a Christmas Eve and no mistake. He was alone on the road and there seemed no sign of pursuit, but he would not chance going far; it didn't take the telephone long to weave a net. He slowed down, and was debating whether to abandon the car in the open or leave it less conspicuously in front of some distant houses, when a tall man stepped from the shadow of a tree and leapt upon the running board.

"Sorry, but I've got to have your car. I'm in a hurry," snapped the stranger. Bert had a glimpse of glinting eyes under a hat pulled down to almost meet an upturned coat-collar; the eyes of one whom the police would be more likely to hunt than employ. Bert Stayler disliked those eyes, but did not fear them.

"What the blazes . . ." he began, but a practised fist took him on the point of the chin. He passed into an oblivion from which he awoke to find himself cold and dizzy and alone in a ditch beneath the Christmas stars.

OUTSIDE the Staylers' house stood a dark blue "Wanderer" two-seater at which Bert stared in dull amazement.

"Oh, Bert, thank heaven you're back," Madge Stayler dashed out of the gate and clutched his arm. "Why, whatever have you done to your face?"

"Nothing," said Bert, a trifle thickly. "Bit of a scrap, that's all. Don't get excited, Madge. How did this car—"

"There's a man in the parlour, Bert. Half-cracked if you ask me. Come from Beechampton, where he found your coat in this car with your address on a letter. Seems to want to murder you for taking his car."

"Murder!" growled her husband. "He's got a nerve. I'll talk to him about Murder."

"He says you've ruined everything and lost him no end of money—"

"I hope I have, the perishing skunk—"

"Here's his card. You'd better see him. I can't make head or tail of his talk. Something about his world-famous dummy which was in the dickey."

Her husband gazed blankly at the card, which bore the following inscription in florid lettering:—
HORATIO VALLERY. The Ventriloquist of Ventriloquists
(and "Egbert of Eton")

Children's Xmas Entertainments a Speciality.
"Gosh!" said Bert Stayler.



"I want to get a present for Pater—how about a nice walking stick?"

"What! Putting ideas into his head"

of Banstead. Another main road crossed and he was on Banstead Downs.

Best, he reckoned, to abandon the car here

A STAGE-HAND suffered from an inconceivable stutter. The kind-hearted management did not want to dismiss him, so they gave him a job high up in the flies, where the minimum of intercourse with him would be necessary.

One day a heavy weight crashed on to the stage during a pantomime rehearsal, scattering the players in every direction, and several moments later they heard the stuttered warning from above, "I—I—say, there—I-I—look out!"

WIFE: "I didn't like the look of that pretty maid you engaged, so I discharged her this afternoon."

Husband: "Before giving her a chance?"
"No, before giving you a chance."

A GOLFER played a long ball which struck an elderly man on the head. The injured party approached the golfer in indignation, asserting that the injury would cost the latter five pounds in compensation.

"But I shouted 'Fore' distinctly," said the player in defence.

"Oh, did ye?" said the old man, "Well, I'll take four quid, but I'm bound to say I didn't hear ye!"

"Yes, I ought to know Cambridge," the young salesman was saying. "I've just been sent down from there."

"How thrilling!" said the pretty customer. "What did you do?"

"Oh, nothing wrong—promotion from our Cambridge branch, you know."

At a Christmas party a young man became a little elevated and proposed marriage to a pretty girl present. The young woman replied, coyly: "Oh, George, you are so sodden."

"WHY doesn't a married man run after his wife like he did before marriage?"

"Well, you know, a mouse in a trap loses its taste for cheese."

THE office-boy was asked to ring up a number, and got the wrong one.

"Mr. Woolf here," came the reply.

"Who?" said the boy.

"Woolf," replied the wrong number.

"Well, who's afraid of you?" asked the boy.

A FASCINATING DRINK

A drink that is so well known that its merits hardly need mentioning here is Ginger Wine, that evergreen favourite at Children's parties. The most satisfactory way of obtaining the best is to make it oneself, from Essence prepared by Messrs. Newball and Mason, Nottingham, from which about one hundred glasses equivalent to eight pints of delicious, warming and refreshing wine can be obtained from a bottle which costs only ninepence.

For the chilly autumn and winter evenings, parties and Christmas festivities, it is particularly suitable, and being wholesome and non-intoxicating can be safely recommended for both young and old.

The same firm have Orange and Black Currant essences as well as Ginger and will send to any reader for the small cost of eightpence, a trial bottle of each essence post free.

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My system of Height Increase and Physical Culture is based on scientific facts and my 23 years of experience, in which I have met with a degree of success unapproached by any other method. I will gladly send you my Free Books, profusely illustrated, which give full information and actual proof of the soundness of my system. Simply send 2d. stamp with Name and Address, stating whether Mr., Mrs., or Miss (there is a special book for ladies).

P. CARNE (Dept. T.B.X.X.),
"Arlington," Rhiwbina, Cardiff, G.B.

Has it ever occurred to you how much money you could save if you gave up SMOKING?



You will be surprised when you read these facts.

An average smoker gets through 20 cigarettes a day. A packet of 20 cigarettes of what are known as the popular brands costs 1/-.

On this basis, a man who smokes 20 cigarettes a day spends £18-5-0 a year on cigarettes.

Supposing a man starts smoking at this rate at the age of 20; by the time he is 30 he has already spent £182-10-0 on cigarettes.

By the time he is 50 his expenditure on cigarettes has grown to the colossal sum of £547-10-0.

And there is nothing to show for it but impaired health.

Supposing this 1/- a day had been put in the bank. Result—£547-10-0 saved, exclusive of interest.

STOP SMOKING and START SAVING NOW by help of the

STANLEY Treatment for Tobacco Habit

You will save not only the money you are now wasting, but your nerves and general health, giving you sounder sleep, a better appetite and altogether a brighter outlook on life. Thousands have mastered the heavy smoking habit quickly, permanently by the help of the Stanley Treatment for Tobacco Habit. The Editor of "Health and Efficiency" says: "It is a pleasure to recommend such a method which brings freedom from the tyranny of tobacco." Think what it would mean to YOU in health and pocket to be done with Tobacco, and write to-day for booklet and particulars of this genuine treatment.—The Stanley Institute (Room 7A), 21, Warwick Lane, London, E.C.4.



IN THE HEADLIGHT'S BEAM

By W. T. Palmer

DURING the evenings of Christmastide many a fairly long motor run is endured often without a word of comment from a somnolent party. Well, they say, whatever is there to see on such a trip?

The flippant ask for ghosts, but the menacing white whirls come only on nights of fog and snow and rain. I have met them in queer places, but a wise person prefers to be home at such a time.

As a passenger with keen interest in night creatures, I see a lot. All the time the panorama is changing and there is excitement. One midnight, returning from a visit, we had a brown owl flying for half a mile in front of the headlights. The grey-lined wings flickered, but though the speedometer showed about thirty miles an hour, we came no nearer. Indeed, when the owl tired of the play it merely slanted its body and wings and curved over the fence into the dusky fields.

On Christmas night runs the driver must be alert, but not strained; the pace must be steady and the engine purr with content. Low-gear work or choked-down engines knock the romance out of motoring at night. In the suburbs the headlights often pick out the grey-green eyes of prowling cats. Except for these slanting eyes, all cats are alike in the night—black, white, grey, or tabby. The coming of the headlight means the suspension of feline battle, but often there is a yell, scramble, fight, and much spitting before the red rear-light is far away.

In the countryside, near barns and farms, the fainter, smaller orbs of rats are seen. I have passed half-a-dozen within a minute. Weasels and stoats may have been seen in such places, but I cannot identify their eyes. Anyway, they hunt by night as well as by day, and progress more agilely than the clumsy brown rats.

During the Christmas nights a party of sheep may be met, or a small purchase being driven home from some auction mart. The lights are curious. I never forget a Welsh sensation, when the car shot round a corner among the mountains, and the slope in front seemed to be banked with blue-green orbs. These were the reflections of travelling sheep, with dogs, quite different in shape of eye and in colour, beside and behind. The car stopped at once, and the flock was driven quietly past. The blue-green orbs turned and passed into the darkness.

Near farms there may be cattle, young stock in the fields, and the way they snort and stare into the headlight's gleam is disconcerting. "Stags" or young horses which winter in the open are also curious about the car. When the evening is calm and there is a gleam of moonlight on the grass, rabbits are rather charming. The tiny eyes catch the gleam; the creatures stop quite still, maybe on hind legs. When the beam passes over them they scurry away. The hare is also

a night wanderer. You see two tiny slits reflected in front, for the creature can see behind it, and the lenses of the eyes bulge queerly.

In pheasant country I have seen a prowling fox in the headlight's gleam. We swept round a corner and illumined his length as he lay along the wall. We noticed even the angry twitch of the tail-end. He was after his supper, and his eyes looked wicked as he turned in our direction and snarled.

Game birds rarely come into the midnight glare. The pheasants roost in the depths of the wood, and I have heard the rocketing yell as the glare came along a field route not often used at night. The partridge will roost on the ground. I had a whirl of these creatures round the headlights. The keeper declared it was a stray covey which had developed a trick of "jugging" in the ditch. The birds lie heads out, tails in, alert against danger.

Another thrilling experience is the whirl of leaves, brown and silver and gold, on a windy night in the lanes. At times I have wondered how the driver kept the trackway when everything was full of whirling fugitive pieces, and the world seemed to be lost. The fairies were dancing, but their sport was a maze for the driver.

Romance at Midnight

THE lights of an approaching car are often interesting. I have seen such limn with white the outline of an ancient keep of the Welsh Border, touch the old church tower of a Midland village. I have watched the coming of a rival for three miles across the levels, noted the whirl and touch of light at every corner, rise, and bridge. The marsh, by the way, was gloriously roused by cars crossing in different directions.

I find a lot of romance in my Christmastide runs at night. There may be a flash from a lighthouse on some dangerous headland or sandbank, the roar of tide on rocks and strand, the white of breakers in the beam, and the black tossing plain on either side.

The rooks round the old church may not welcome the beam among their roosting trees, but they have ceased to be disturbed by it. In early motoring days a certain rookery was almost abandoned because the trees were flooded by light every night. The distance shown in some beams is wonderful. On a clear, calm night I have watched the headlights bring out the detail of rocks and bushes on the hills two miles away.

So we come back to the town again. There are more cats to be caught prowling, more sneaking dogs to avert their eyes. The passengers awake and say they have never closed an eye all the way—"Wasn't it a wonderful trip?" Had they seen the beauties of the road their approval would not have been so perfunctory and civil as all that. They have not shared my joy of the darkened route.

NURSERY RHYMES—1934

By A. B. Cooper

Author of "Poets in Pinafores," etc.

MARY has a little car;
It is painted blue;
And when Mary goes to bed,
Her little car goes, too!

And she parks it on her cot
Till she's said her prayers,
Dumps it on the nursery floor
When Mummie goes downstairs.

When the house is fast asleep,
Not a speck of sound,
Mary in her nightie-coat
Pedals round and round.

If the moon is shining bright,
And the barn owls hoot,
Mary lifts the window wide,
Blows her horn: "Toot! toot!"

Instantly her car picks up
Silver Arrow speed,
Whisks her off to Jericho,
Farther still, indeed!

When for petrol she pulls up,
Or 'cause her engine's hot,
Back she is to morning-land
And her little cot!

LITTLE Tommy Tupper
Has vitamins for supper:
Vitamin A, Vitamin B,
Vitamin C, Vitamin D;
But the alphabet
Is not finished yet,
Letters plenty,
Six-and-twenty!
And I guess he'll have to eat
Down to Z, and then repeat,
And I wouldn't be surprised
If he grew up undersized.

As I would not like to be
Undersized like Tommy T.,
To make sure, I think I'll try
Just a wedge of Christmas Pie,
Then, perhaps—though Mums knows best—
I'll slice off the turkey's breast;
And I think that I could do
Justice to the stuffing, too;
And a sausage, crisp and brown,
I might manage to put down,
And perhaps I'll help these out
With a parsnip and a sprout,
And I wouldn't
make a fuss
If I had asparagus,
And there's certainly
"nae doot"
I could sample candied fruit,
And a nut or two, I
think
I could fondle with
my drink.
As for that, a cock-
tail made
Out of jam and
lemonade,
Would, I fancy,
make me feel
That for once I'd
had a meal!



Landed in a field of clover!

JACK and Jill had such a spill
Motoring down Tricky Hill,
Which, they say, is one in three,
So as steep as it can be;
Didn't go into low gear,
Had good brakes so had no fear,
Would refuse to give a miss
To a pukka precipice;
Wouldn't even blow their horn
Dashing down the Matterhorn!
Didn't reckon on a skid—
Quite the biggest Jack e'er did—
Tried to save a wandering hen,
Spun right round and back again.
Hit a tree and turned clean over,
Landed in a field of clover!

Jack and Jill rate Tricky Hill
Quite the best spot for a spill,
For Jack kissed Jill in the clover,
Kissed her several times, moreover.
Said: "From John o' Groat's to Dover
You are much the sweetest maid
The Almighty ever made."
(Laid it on thick with a spade!)
And, like any other lover,
Jack proposed among the clover,
And Jill said, "I'll think it over!"

TWINKLE, twinkle, Aeroplane,
Modern marvel of man's brain,
Up above the world so far
'Fraid you'll bump against a star!

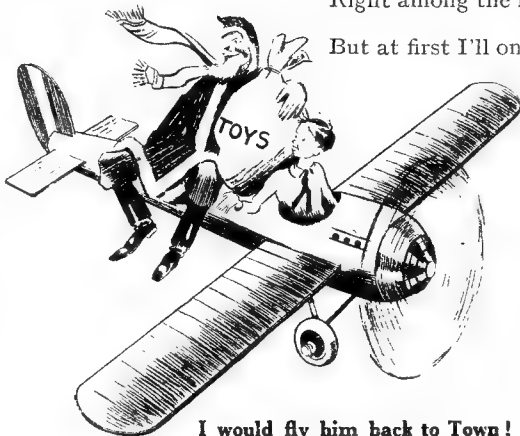
If my Mums won't make a fuss
Someday I will fly my "bus,"
And I think I'd like to try
To fly higher than the sky.

If I'm good as gold, some day
I shall take the Milky Way,
And come down and get my tea
Right among the nebulae.

But at first I'll only go

Over Arctic ice and
snow,
To the Northern
Pole, because
There I'd find old
Santa Claus,

And I'd be the very
first
On the dear old chap
to burst,
And, when he had
donned his gown,
I would fly him back
to Town!



I would fly him back to Town!

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TURKEY-TIME

Ten Million Christmas Dinners

By Guillan Hopper

TEN MILLION turkeys will squat, sizzling appetizingly, on ten million English dinner-tables at Christmas. While our own Norfolk birds are first favourites, the demand for turkeys at Christmas-time in Britain is so great that hundreds of thousands of fine birds are imported from abroad.

Down in the Argentine the *gauchos* rely upon our liking for turkey to keep them employed during the off-season in the cattle industry. For three months vast herds of turkeys come gobbling along the pampas trails towards the *frigorificos*, as the great South American abattoirs are called.

At the head of a contingent of some two thousand birds rides a lone horseman scattering maize from a bag slung across the pommel of his saddle.

Gobbling, gobbling, gobbling, the feathered army follows slowly along the trail of golden grain that leads to death—and the place of honour at the feast of Christmas in a country six thousand miles away.

Behind the birds another army scampers in joyous confusion—a score of little Argentine ragamuffins armed with long sticks with which they tickle up the stragglers of the gobbling legion. For these services the *vagabonditos* are paid a penny or so—*cinco centavos* for doing something that they would willingly perform gratis.

TURKEYS can only be coaxed along. Cease scattering the maize and the birds refuse to budge an inch despite the rather violent attentions of the urchins.

At last they reach the gates of the *frigorifico* and are guided into great wire-netted cages.

"Buenos días! Don José."

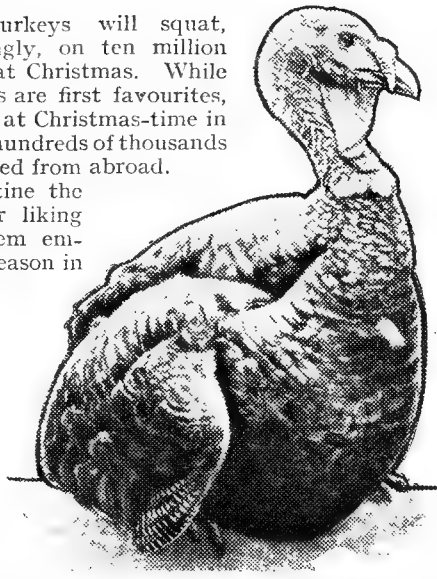
The tough Irish-American buyer for the *frigorifico* company greets the old *gaucho* turkey-raiser.

The buyer picks up one of the birds casually and feels its crop for maize. Maize is only eight *centavos* a kilogram and the price of live turkeys is forty *centavos*—a little point not unnoticed by either buyer or seller.

"Well, great thief," comments the buyer, pleasantly, "I see that you have taken great care that every one of your miserable birds carries a crop full of maize!"

"Hold your tongue, unspeakable *gringo*!" returns old Don José, good-humouredly. "My birds have been nearly two days without food on the journey and their crops are far cleaner than your conscience!"

Next the weighing ceremony begins. There are six classifications in which the birds may be placed. Three kinds of toms, two kinds of hens, and, finally, the rejected birds. The latter are purchased at a very much lower price and are destined for sale to the employees of the packing-



house, and for consumption in the staff mess-room. Every time the buyer rejects a bird the old man utters loud protests, never once taking his eyes from the scales.

After being examined and weighed each bird is at once passed along to the turkey-killing department, where it is quickly and painlessly dispatched and the crop cleaned out. Crops often contain a weird assortment of articles besides a quantity of undigested maize.

Some years ago Count Romanones, six times Spanish Premier, purchased several thousand turkeys in order to search their crops for—pearls! His little

son had seen a flock of birds being led along in the usual manner by scattering maize, and seeing a little dish containing some three hundred fine pearls on his father's desk, joined in the fun by throwing a handful from the window before his parent could prevent it. Down below the turkeys lost no time in gobbling up the priceless jewels, and as a consequence the Count had to buy the whole flock so that he could have them killed and regain his pearls from their crops.

AFTER being killed, plucked, and cleaned, the birds are immediately sent into the cold storage chambers for final dressing, packing, and storing.

On each wing four tip feathers have to be left and on the neck exactly two inches of plumage. Nobody seems to know why the London market demands this, but orders are orders, and if the *frigorifico* fails to carry out instructions, British market-men will have something to say!

The feet are scrubbed in warm water and the body examined for any stubs of quills that may remain.

The birds are next given the London classifications and packed in neat three-ply boxes labelled, "Extra Fancy Young Toms," "Fancy Young Toms," or simply "Young Tom Turkeys." The hens are given similar labels before they grace the shop-fronts of markets thousands of miles away.

There is an ever-increasing demand for turkeys at Christmas-time in this country, and British farmers should supply a far greater number of birds than they are doing at present. Norfolk and Sussex could raise treble the number of turkeys they are doing without causing the importers of foreign produce to worry.

There are two turkeys in England who never have to worry about the approach of Christmas—lucky birds! They are kept by an archery club to supply members with feathers for their shafts.

MRS. WENCESLAS

By Greta Briggs

MRS. WENCESLAS went out
On the Feast of Stephen,
To visit cronies round about
With gossip to keep even.

She bid the King: "Now mind your age,
You stay clear of folly,
Let that good-for-nothing page
Hang up all the holly."

She got home when dusk was long
And tea parties over,
Bringing recipes for strong
Concoctions made from clover.

"Now where is the King?" she said,
"Why is he delaying?
Why should he have kept from bed?
Where can he be straying?"

"Madame," said the waiting-maid,
Coming from the chantry,
"Master must have, I'm afraid,
Been delving in the pantry."

Her mistress to the larder flew,
Exclaiming then: "The glutton!
Here is never bite for two,
Beef or pork or mutton."

"Gone the pies from bakery,
Joints we cut on Sunday,
The brawn for Wenceslas's tea,
And sausages for Monday."

"No patience I with feckless ways,
There's no beer in the butt now,
No food for over holidays,
And shops be surely shut now."

The maid, the cellar looked within,
She was gloomy, very,
Not a bottle in the bin,
Champagne, cider, sherry.

"Madame, too, the logs are fled,
And the dusk turns cool here,
Yet where is the firewood spread
That we had for Yule here?"

"We've, my maid, no supper then,
No wood on hearth for burning,"
Come our errant gentlemen,
King and page returning.

"Wenceslas, what could you mean
Thus to be a-wandering,
Splendid pasties, firewood green,
Richest wines a-squandering?"

"Dearest, have a milder look
And awhile be heeding,
'Twas but little stuff I took,
Little fire and feeding."

Mrs. Wenceslas, she grew
Sad with doubt and sorrow,
"Food is gone; you surely knew
Ma arrives to-morrow?"

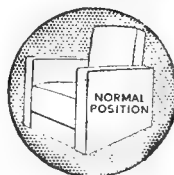
"Yet she'd have fair cause to scoff,
Hearth and board so shabby,
She must lodge then nine miles off
With Sisters at the Abbey."

Then King Wenceslas he spoke:
"Well and bright is living,
Those who give to simple folk
Benefit by giving."

Rest you merry gentlemen



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Christmas comes but once a year—but if your gift is a Berkeley Superlax it will fulfil your wish for happiness every day through many years to come. What glorious comfort and pleasure a Berkeley Superlax brings to its proud owner! What luxurious beauty it gives to the room in which it is placed! What wonderful satisfaction and lasting service is assured through its fine construction, the quality of materials and its amazing value! This superb Easy Chair is designed to suit everyone—tall or short. It fits in with every mood—takes up any position from the upright to the lounging, AUTOMATICALLY, without getting out of the chair.

The seat is not only perfectly sprung, but is ALL-HAIR stuffed. The back is also sprung and deeply upholstered. Both back and seat are quickly detachable from the main frame for easy, thorough cleaning. Fitted with concealed castors which raise the chair 1½ ins. from the floor. Coverings are the very latest, most fashionable designs in multi-coloured Repp in a variety of shades. Other Coverings are Damasks, Tapestries, Moquettes, etc. Send Coupon for Catalogue giving full details of all Models and Patterns from which to choose your own Coverings.

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Please send me your Illustrated
Catalogue of all Models of Berkeley
Upholstery, together with complete
range of Coverings.

NAME

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Tit-Bits Extra



"Confound it! Frozen! Now what am I going to do with my razor blades?"

TINY TOTS

TINY tots in nighties,
Waking ere the light,
Want to see what Santa's
Brought them in the night—
"Pwaps he's b'wrought a dolly!"
"Pwaps he's b'wrought a dwum!"
"Pwaps he's quite forgotten!"
"Mummie said he'd tum!"

Tiny tots in nighties,
Waking from repose,
Keen to see what Santa's
Stuffed into their hose!
"O-o-h! I've dot a whistle;
Listen when I blow!"
"H-e-e! There's somesing bulgy
Wight down in the toe!"

Tiny tots in nighties
Gurgling in their joy,
Here a box of sweets,
There a lovely toy;
Teddy Bear and Bonzo,
Bricks and Noah's Ark,
Playthings dear old Santa
Dumped down in the dark!

Tiny tots in nighties,
Joy they can't contain,
Make us wish—we oldsters—
We were young again;
"Tum an' let's find mummie!"
"Daddy hasn't seen!"
"Tum an' let us tell zem
Santa Claus has been!"

A. B. COOPER.

A NEWLY-MARRIED woman was showing off to a friend the treasures of her home, including a neat sports car.

"I suppose your father got you that?" said the visitor.

"Not likely," was the indignant reply. "George wouldn't accept such a thing. All that father pays for is the rent and the housekeeping expenses."

THE young man applied to a football manager for a job. He was told there were no vacancies on the playing staff, but was offered a job on the turnstiles.

"Oh, I can't do that," he said. "I can't add up; my head's a bit funny."

Then he was offered a job scavenging paper after the matches.

"No. All the little bits of white paper would make my head ache," he said. "You see, I've just come out of hospital."

"The very man we want," replied the manager. "We've a vacancy on the board of directors. Come and help 'em pick the team!"

A MOTHER had been telling her small son some of the "facts of life," and when she finished she said: "Now, my boy, are there any questions you would like to ask? Anything at all; don't be afraid."

After a little heavy thinking the boy replied: "Well, yes, there's something I've been wanting to know for a long time."

She asked him what it was.

"Mother, just how do they make bricks?"

JAZZ BAND CRACKERS

A "STOP"—
"Go" traffic
signal with red,
amber, and green
lights is one of the
novelties in Christ-
mas Cracker table-
aux this year.
There's a comic
policeman, too, on point duty, and a
stream of model cars. The policeman is
one of those quaint fellows with a wobbly
head which never keeps still.

Fun In Store For Christmas

Thus, the festive Cracker keeps up-to-the-minute, thanks to designers, who are always looking for new ideas. Another original tableau is a miniature dance band, complete with conductor and microphone. The crackers comprise the stage; the jazz musicians are bright little chaps in red coats, with red-striped white trousers, each one a snappy souvenir for a child guest to take away from the party.

A N ingenious innovation is a box in the form of a realistic aquarium. The sides are composed of gelatine paper tinted to give an impression of water; the crackers are the paradise fish swimming about in it among ferns and weeds. A delightful creation!

The element of surprise is an important feature of any Christmas party. Old Tom Smith, the Cracker Wizard, has accordingly arranged that toys and presents shall be hidden and pulled out of a "lucky dip" with strings instead of being displayed openly on the table.

This is a feature of a Fire Alarm box of crackers, also of a merry King Sol. You break the gelatine glass of the Alarm, pull a string, and get a toy or hat instead of the Fire Brigade; in the case of old Sol, you pull a string and a present pops out of his laughing mouth!

More fun is provided by crackers in the form of a Helter-Skelter lighthouse, with miniature dolls to slide down the "skid." There are even crackers in the shape of Eskimo snow-huts or "igloos." One box is a romantic Happiness Villa, with dolls at door and window and a Teddy bear perched on top of the chimney.

SOME of the boxes are of rare beauty. They include a Venetian gondola with gondolier, Pompadour ladies with organdie tinsel skirts, crackers with rainbow-dyed silk handkerchiefs attached, crackers dressed as fairy dancers, crackers with a miniature Christmas tree and candle at the centre, and a box in imitation of an iced cake with six candles surmounting it and a dozen strings for pulling out toys and hats.

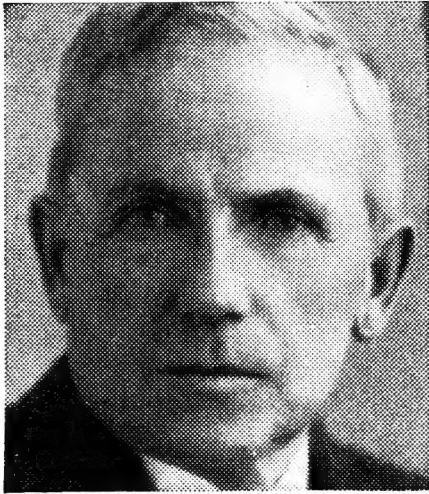
A new process of colour-printing on foil has produced crackers of a gleaming, metallic beauty; others reflect the modern taste for delicate pastel shades. One box has crackers decorated with Loch Ness Monsters! You find crackers affixed to brightly-coloured parasols with chrysanthemum fringes.

The modern cracker is not only a "bang" and a paper hat and novelty, but an art.

—X—

"I BOUGHT that dress for a ridiculous price."

"You mean you bought it for an absurd figure, darling."



20 YEARS OF ABDOMINAL PAINS AND SEVERE HEADACHES CAUSED BY CHRONIC INDIGESTION

"For the last 20 years I have suffered from Chronic Indigestion, Severe pains in my stomach and terrible headaches. I tried most things but got no relief until I received your Free sample which I started taking right away. Before I had finished the contents I felt altogether different and decided on having a large tin and giving it a fair chance. Now, I feel a different man, no pains, and sleep well, and I can eat anything!"

writes Mr. W. MUNNS,
9, Suffield Road, Kirkdale, Liverpool, 4.

BIRLEY'S ANTACID POWDER

IS THE SUPREME RAPID-ACTION REMEDY FOR

INDIGESTION

ACID STOMACH
FLATULENCE
HEARTBURN
BILIOUSNESS

PALPITATION
GASTRITIS
NAUSEA
RHEUMATISM

Birley's is so amazingly efficacious for all stomach troubles that we ask you to try it AT OUR EXPENSE. We will send you your first Tin (exact size of illustration) FREE and POST PAID. All you need do is to send Coupon in $\frac{1}{2}$ d. stamped unsealed envelope and you'll receive the Free 9d. Tin by return. It contains more than enough to prove it is the WORLD'S BEST Remedy for Indigestion and its attendant ailments. Tasteless and Harmless.

The 9d. tin is put up for FREE Trial only and is not for sale.

Of all Chemists, including Boots, Taylors, Timothy Whites, in 1/3, 3/- & 5/- tins only



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FREE

9 D.
TIN
POST PAID

FILL IN THIS COUPON NOW!

To BIRLEY'S ANTACID LTD., 16-18, Northdown Street, King's Cross, London, N.1. **No. F.10**

I have not previously tried Birley's Antacid Powder, so send me FREE 9d. Trial Tin, Post Paid.

NAME
(Mr., Mrs. or Miss)
ADDRESS

Use unsealed envelope with $\frac{1}{2}$ d. stamp. Enclose nothing else or postage will be more. *Please write clearly.*

THE HAPPY CHRISTMAS EXTRA

FROM his suit-case first he took for her a tin of cigarettes,
And he got a little kiss for that;

Then some dressing-table gadgets in the daintiest of sets,
And he got a bigger kiss for that;

Then he said "I haven't finished, and I do not want to brag,
But I rather think I've got an inspiration in this bag."

Then he fished her out a copy of THE CHRISTMAS HAPPY MAG.,
And he got the biggest kiss for that.

On sale at all Newsagents and Bookstalls, or post free 3d., from George
Newnes, Ltd., 8-11 Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2.

1/-

WELL, A MERRY CHRISTMAS!



GOOD CUSTOMER

A GENIAL and hospitable innkeeper posed as Father Christmas. An enormous pork pie graced the bar counter, and customers were invited to help themselves. On Christmas Eve a stranger walked in, sat down, and cut off a huge slice.

Half an hour later the man was eating as ravenously as ever, and the landlord could stand it no longer.

"You'll excuse me, sir," he remarked, tapping the man on the shoulder, "but I don't remember your face. You're not a customer."

"Pardon me," was the polite response, as the stranger helped himself to another slice. "I was here last Christmas Eve, and"—with his mouth full of pie—"if all goes well I shall be here next!"

CLARICE (motoring): "I said you could kiss me, but I didn't say you could hug me."

Henry: "Oh, that's all right; I just threw in the clutch."

TERMINUS

It was a cold, wintry morning, and the thin man walked rapidly down the hill towards his place of business. Suddenly a piece of ice under the snow caused him to lose control of his feet, and down he began to slide like a ready-made sleigh.

He encountered a heavy woman, her arms full of all sorts of bundles and bags. The meeting was sudden, and a moment later both were sliding down the hill—the thin man underneath, the fat woman on top.

At last they reached the bottom, and there the woman sat, gasping and trying to regain her breath.

"Pardon me, madam," came a faint voice from below, "but you'll have to get off here. This is as far as I go."

THE WOMAN IN THE CASE

A WOMAN was being shown over a country seat in North Wales famous for its fine pictures. One of these was a portrait of "Nell Gwyn, after Sir Peter Lely."

The woman gazed at this picture with marked interest.

"So that's the hussy, is it?" she remarked, presently; "but I always thought it was King Charles II she was after."

ON THE SPOT

THE squire's son was home for Christmas, and, in his usual friendly fashion, dropped into The Three Pigeons for a drink and a chat.

One of the villagers said to him, "Well, Master Stephen, and how be you gettin' on in Lunnnon?"

"Well," came the reply, "I'm getting along pretty well, thanks. I've just been called to the Bar, you know."

There was silence for a moment, and then the inquirer said, with a shake of his head, "You didn't use to need much callin' when you lived 'ere."

DILEMMA

THERE had been a brass band contest in a Scottish town, and the winners were returning home by train in a very jubilant condition. The smallest man of the party sat in a corner seat and persisted in singing



"Scots Wha Hae," "Willie Brewed a Peck o' Maut," and other ditties. The instruments were packed in the carriage.

At the station just before reaching Edinburgh a ticket collector appeared at the door and demanded tickets. The little man became serious at once, and said, solemnly, "I've lost ma ticket!"

"Lost your ticket?" said the collector. "You can't have lost your ticket. They were checked at Queensferry."

"I don't know about that," said the little man, dolefully, "but I'm tellin' ye I've lost ma ticket."

The collector insisted upon the little man searching his pockets, the train being held up meanwhile, but the investigation was in vain.

"I'm tellin' ye I've lost ma ticket!" the man repeated.

"But you can't have lost it," said the collector; "it's impossible!"

"Impossible, is it? Then let me tell ye it's naething of the kind, young man, for I've lost ma big drum as well!"



QUITE DIFFERENT

THE Colonel's gout was giving him trouble and, as a result, he was very irritable. When the waits stopped under his window he thought like throwing the boot he was forced to discard at them. After singing "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing" and "The Mistletoe Bough," they departed. On Boxing Day they paid him a visit.

"We played under your window last night, sir," said the spokesman.

"Well, what do you want?" growled the Colonel.

"We've come for our little gratuity, sir."

"Gratuity!" thundered the Colonel. "Heavens, man, I thought you'd come to apologize!"

MAKING SURE

THE English visitor in Aberdeen was invited out to dinner on Christmas Day. The pudding made its appearance, and the guest smiled his appreciation.

"They say," he said, "that whoever finds the threepenny piece in the pudding will be lucky."

"Ay—an' clever, too!" responded the host.

"WHY have you broken off your engagement with Reggie?"

"He told me he was connected with the movies, and last week I saw him on a furniture van."

BACK TO THE FOLD

A CHRISTMAS circus lion escaped from its cage into the surrounding Yorkshire countryside. No hue and cry was raised, but the circus men began to scour the district.

Two days later a hefty Yorkshireman appeared at the circus leading on a rope an undamaged but obviously subdued king of beasts.

"I've browt thy dog back, maister," he said, simply.



Mr. Nimble-foot Says—

There's No Doubt About It



Elasto Does Lighten Your Step!

Elasto Will Save You Time, Worry, Suffering and Expense. It Improves the General Health and Increases Vitality.

ELASTO is something new to curative science: it is based on the knowledge that bad circulation, muscular weakness, varicose veins, rheumatism and leg troubles generally, with their numerous developments and widely varied symptoms, are deficiency diseases; that in all such conditions there is a lack of certain vital constituents of the blood.

Owing to this lack, the body is unable to build up the elastic tissue needed to maintain the vein and artery walls and the membranes in healthy condition, and a state of flabbiness results.

Elasto restores to the blood the vital elements which combine with albumin to form elastic tissue and thus enables Nature to restore contractility to the relaxed and devitalised fabric of veins, arteries and heart, and so to re-establish normal circulation; the real basis of sound health.

Every sufferer should know of this wonderful new biological remedy which quickly brings ease and

comfort and creates within the system a new health force; overcoming relaxed conditions, increasing vitality and bringing into full activity Nature's own laws of healing. Elasto is prepared in tiny tablets which dissolve instantly on the tongue, and is the pleasantest, the cheapest and the most effective remedy ever devised.

Old-fashioned treatments are too crude and costly to-day and there is no longer any excuse for wasting money on them.

For the outlay of a few shillings you can now enjoy the tremendous advantages of this Modern Scientific Remedy which has cost thousands of pounds to perfect.

Elasto cures bad circulation, varicose veins, ulcers, eczema, psoriasis, phlebitis, thrombosis, heart trouble, muscular weakness, swollen legs, inflamed wounds, gout, rheumatism, neuritis, and all those troubles generally known as bad legs.

Elasto also cures piles, prolapsus, varicocele, hardened arteries (arterio-sclerosis) arthritis, sciatica, lumbago, and all relaxed conditions, no matter where they occur.

How the Leg-Weary Are Being Made Nimble and Active by this Wonderful New Biological Remedy.

LEG pains soon cease when Elasto is taken. Varicose veins are forgotten and soon become normal, skin troubles clear up, old wounds become clean and healthy and commence to heal. rheumatism is quickly relieved, and the whole system is braced and strengthened. This is not magic, although the relief does seem magical; it is the natural result of revitalized blood and improved circulation brought about by Elasto.

Read What Users of Elasto Say, Then Test This Wonderful Remedy Yourself!

"Elasto put new life into me."
"No sign of varicose veins now."
"I was suffering from mitral disease and dare not exert myself in any way, but now, thanks to Elasto, my heart is quite sound again."
"My doctor highly praises Elasto."
"Now walk long distances with ease."
"Elasto has cured my bad legs."
"Cured my rheumatism and neuritis."
"Now free from piles."
"I feel 10 years younger."
"It put me on my feet."
"Varicose veins completely gone."
"All signs of phlebitis gone."
"Completely cured my varicose ulcers."
"I am now free from pain."
"My skin is as soft as velvet."
"Elasto tones up the system and cures depression."
"As soon as I started taking Elasto I could go about my work in comfort, no pain whatever."
"Varicose veins quickly cured after 12 years of useless bandaging."
"Cured my swollen legs although I had been suffering for years."
"The stinging sensations I used to get in my left arm and leg (arterio-sclerosis) are quite gone and my general health is much improved."
"Had rheumatism so badly I could hardly walk, but Elasto cured me."
"Cured my sciatica 12 months ago, still quite fit."
"Lumbago cured after 3 years of suffering, Aged 66."
"Elasto has saved me pounds."
"Suffered for years from a weak heart, but Elasto cured me."
"Rheumatoid arthritis gone. I have never felt better." Etc.

Elasto cannot fail to do you good; many people claim that they get wonderful relief from the free sample alone!

Here is Your Great Opportunity!

FREE

A generous Sample of this Wonder Remedy

Elasto cures all Circulatory Diseases because it restores muscular tone to the Heart and contractility to Veins and Arteries, making them as healthy and as sound as ever.

Beware of Imitations!

SIMPLY fill in the Coupon below for a Free Sample and a Special Free Booklet fully explaining Elasto, The New Biological Remedy. These, together with copies of recent testimonials, we will gladly send privately, post free. Don't lose another moment! Write for these to-day—NOW, while you think of it and see for yourself what a wonderful difference Elasto makes!!

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COUPON for Free Trial Sample of Elasto. ★

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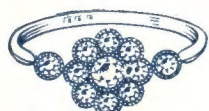
Please send me Free Sample and Special Free Booklet fully explaining how Elasto, *The Great Blood Revitaliser*, cures through the blood.

NAME.....
(Please Print in Capital Letters.)

ADDRESS.....

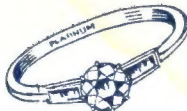
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Fine white Diamonds
18 Carat Gold & Platinum

£6



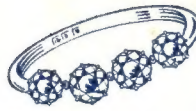
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Pure Platinum.
A beautiful Solitaire Ring
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A Choice Cross-Over
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Platinum & 18 Ct Gold
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Fine Diamonds
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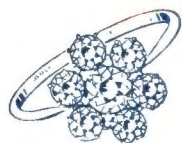
Specimen Diamond
18 Ct Gold & Platinum.
Diamond Shoulders.

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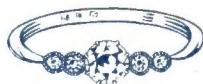
Popular Half Hoop of
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The Daisy Cluster
White Diamonds
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A popular design
White Diamonds 18
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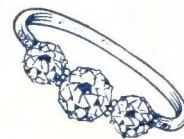
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wonderful value, handsome
settings, 18 carat Gold &
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& then you will know that
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The Fashionable Solitaire
Beautiful Diamond.
In Pure Platinum

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Fine Diamonds
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*A dignified ring for
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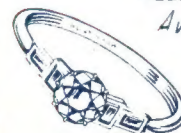
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Pure Platinum
Diamond Baguettes

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Fine Diamonds
Platinum & 18 Ct Gold
A very effective ring

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Beautiful white
Diamond Pure
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A Magnificent Ring
White Diamonds in
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Lustrous white
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A 'chic' ring
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Well matched
Diamonds in 18 Ct.
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A lovely 3 stone ring.
Fine Diamonds.
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PRECIOUS STONES
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